In This Issue
1. Coalition Launches Fresh Campaign For Enactment Of Freedom of Information Act
2. Media Groups Campaign For Equitable Access To The Media For Political Parties
3. MFWA Expresses Concern Over Safety Of 4 Liberian Journalists
4. Worldwatch Institute Publishes ‘State Of The World’ Report
5. Africa Advocacy Workshop Holds In June
6. African Commission Holds 33rd Session In Niamey in May
7. AMARC Elects New International Board
8. IAPA Calls for Essay On Press Freedom
9. Press Freedom Group Protests Libya’s Chairing of UN Human Rights Commission
10. Research Fellowship on African Youth in a Global Age 2003-2004
11. WPFC To Hold Conference On Free Expression On The Internet
12. Investigative Journalism Conference to Launch Global Network
13. Time To Get Online Website Goes Live, Offers Learning Materials
14. World Movement for Democracy’s Third Assembly Postponed
15. African Media Forum Schedules Second Meeting for May
16. World’s Press Meets In Dublin On Challenges To The Industry
17. Press Freedom Suppressed In 2002 In The Name Of Terror, Says IPI
18. President Buyoya Bars Radio Stations From Airing Rebel Statements
19. MRA Launches Media Access Programme For Disadvantaged Groups
20. Index On Censorship Honours ‘Al Jazeera’
21. Global Network Identifies 700 Information Sources For AIDS Professionals
22. INEC Launches Website For Elections
23. Centre African Holds 11th Training Course on International Human Rights Procedures
24. ATTACKS ON THE PRESS IN MARCH 2003
25. MEDIA / PRESS FREEDOM AWARDS

Coalition Launches Fresh Campaign For Enactment Of Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Coalition launched last month a new phase in its drive to secure the enactment of the Freedom of Information Bill into law by making it an issue in the electioneering campaigns.

Members of the Coalition met in Lagos, first with editors from the print and broadcast sectors and then with political correspondents, soliciting their assistance in making the enactment of the Bill an electoral campaign issue.

The Coalition, acting through its secretariat at Media Rights Agenda (MRA), also wrote to the chairmen and secretaries of all the political parties as well as their presidential candidates asking them to work towards ensuring that the right of Nigerians to have access to public records and information becomes a cardinal policy of their parties and seeking a “clear and unequivocal commitment” from them to support the enactment of the Bill into law.

Also last month, the National Human Rights Commission, working with representatives of civil society organisations, also carried out advocacy visits to key Federal Government departments and agencies in Abuja asking them to support the passage of the Bill into law.

The coalition’s meetings with editors and political correspondents, held with support from the International Human Rights Law Group. The main purpose of the meetings was to solicit media support in ensuring that politicians seeking to stand for election into various offices are compelled to state their
position on the twin issues of transparency and accountability in government, and also make a commitment to support the efforts to enact a law, which gives a legal right to citizens to have access to public information.

The meeting with the editors was organized by MRA, on behalf of the Coalition, in collaboration with the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE), one of the earliest bodies to endorse the campaign for the freedom of information law in Nigeria. It was held at the Lagos Airport Hotel in Ikeja.

The meeting was attended by the President of the NGE, Mrs. Remi Oyo, and editors from some major media establishments. Members of the Coalition present included Mr. Edetaen Ojo, MRA’s Executive Director; Mr. Sola Isola, Executive Director of the Independent Journalism Center (IJC); Mr. Lanre Arogundade, Coordinator of the International Press Center (IPC); and Mr. Osaro Odemwingie, Coordinator of the FOI Coalition.

In an opening address, Mr. Ojo informed the participants that the meeting was necessitated by the need to continue to mobilize support for the enactment of the Bill presently before the National Assembly. Tracing the history of the Bill, Mr. Ojo explained that it was one of the very first Bills to be sent to the National Assembly at the inception of this government, adding that it was presented to the National Assembly one month after its inauguration in June 1999. He expressed disappointment at the failure of the National Assembly to pass the Bill after nearly four years, despite the widespread public support for the Bill.

He explained that the FOI Secretariat and members of the Coalition have decided to make the passage of the Bill a campaign issue by introducing it into the political discourse and requested the editors to consider impressing it on their political correspondents and reporters to constantly ask politicians to state their positions on the issue of access to public record, which is at the heart of accountability and transparency.

Mr. Ojo noted that in this way, politicians would be sensitized to the existence of the Bill and forced to make a commitment to support efforts towards its passage when they assume office.

In her address, Mrs. Oyo noted that the Guild was very much in support of the advocacy for the enactment of the Bill into law, explaining that the support of the Guild stemmed from its belief that a Freedom of Information regime will not only serve to strengthen the media, but would also help in consolidating Nigeria’s democracy.

Following discussions at the meeting, a 17-point agreement was reached by the participants on how to further the campaign for the enactment of the Bill into law.

Some of the agreements include that:

- The advocacy strategy adopted so far for the passage of the Bill has been too diplomatic and that a more combative approach needs to be adopted since legislators do not seem to have responded sufficiently positively to the diplomatic efforts.
- More professional bodies and associations cutting across all sectors of the society should be encouraged to become involved in the campaign for the enactment of the Bill and possibly join the coalition. These could include the Nigerian Press Organisation, the Broadcasting Organization of Nigeria, the Nigerian Bar Association, the Nigerian Medical Association, the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, the Nigerian Stock Exchange, the Nigerian Labour Congress, Concerned Professionals, Integrity, various Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Corporate Nigeria, etc.
- Journalists should make it a point of duty to use every opportunity to ask politicians to state their positions on the issue of transparency and accountability in government in general and specifically on the enactment of the Bill into law.
- The FOI coalition secretariat should expedite action on its proposal to send a memorandum on the Bill to all the political parties and to as many officers of each of the parties as possible.
- The FOI coalition secretariat should contact all known journalists and human rights activists that are vying for political offices to make a commitment to support the passage of the Bill into law upon winning elections into office.

The meeting with political editors and correspondents, which held at the Lagos Travel Inn in Ikeja followed a similar pattern.

The meeting was attended by scores of political correspondents and reporters from some major media establishments. Members of the FOI Coalition present also included Mr. Ojo, Mr. Isola, Mr.
Mr. Ojo observed that although it took the National Assembly less than three months to initiate and conclude a process of drafting and passing a new Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act to replace the existing one, the same national assembly has neglected for nearly four years to pass the FOI Bill despite the public support for it.

Explaining the efforts so far made to secure the enactment of the Bill into law, he said at the onset of the campaign, MRA wrote personal letters to all members of the House of Representatives enclosing copies of the Bill and other relevant documents. Besides, he said, representatives of MRA undertook series of advocacy visits to the National Assembly where it met a substantial number of the members of both the House and the Senate and later organized a cocktail reception for members of the House where the issue of the Bill was further discussed and commitments made by the legislators to pass it within the shortest possible time.

Mr. Ojo recalled that MRA facilitated meetings for members of the House Committee on Information with groups and government officials in countries like the United States and the United Kingdom to give them a better appreciation of the principles of freedom of information laws, and explained MRA’s role in the public hearing held on the Bill by the Committee on Information in an effort to ensure that the Bill progressed speedily through the legislative process.

He requested the political correspondents and reporters to consider constantly asking politicians to state their positions on the issue of access to public record.

At the end of the meeting, many of the journalist participants made commitments to work towards the enactment of the Bill into law. A 17-point agreement was also reached, many of the then similar those reached at the meeting with editors.

It was also agreed that MRA and the FOI Coalition should commence a signature collection campaign targeted at journalists and other members of the society who support the passage of the Bill.

In the letters written to all the political parties, MRA solicited their support on behalf of the Coalition for the enactment into law of the Freedom of Information Bill.

The letters, signed by Mr. Ojo, explained that the FOI Coalition, an alliance of civil society organizations campaigning for the enactment of a Freedom of Information law in Nigeria, believed that the existence of such a legislation was crucial to entrenching a culture of transparency and accountability in government and in ensuring effective public participation in the democratic process.

He expressed the hope that the party officials and their presidential candidates would work towards ensuring that the right of Nigerians to have access to public records and information becomes a cardinal policy of their parties and that they would make a clear and unequivocal commitment to support the enactment of the Bill into law.

MRA also provided them with materials on access to information, including copies of the Freedom of Information Bill, a series of documents giving background information to the Bill and a document entitled “The Public’s Right to Know”, published by ARTICLE 19, the Global Campaign for Free Expression, in London which sets out the ways in which governments can achieve maximum openness in line with the best international standards and practice.

Mr. Ojo urged them to share the information and documents with other members of their parties. Meanwhile, the weeklong programme of advocacy visits embarked upon in Abuja by the National Human Rights Commission began on Monday, March 24, with a visit to the management of the National Orientation Agency (NOA).

Mr. Tony Iredia, the Director-General of the Agency and his team of the executive directors received members of the advocacy team, led by the Executive Secretary of the National Human Rights Commission, Mr. Bukhari Bello; other members of the team were MRA’s Maxwell Kadiri; Mr. Mike Aruleba of the African Independent Television and RayPower Radio; Mr. Eze Anaba, Deputy News Editor of Vanguard newspaper and a board member of MRA; Mr. Wale Fapohunda, managing partner of the Legal Resources Consortium; and Mr. Tony Ojukwu, also of the Commission.

Mr. Bello told the NOA officials that the advocacy team was at the Agency to solicit their support for the passage of the Freedom of Information Bill and expressed the hope that they would use their medium to disseminate information on Bill and sensitize the Executive, members of the National Assembly and the generality of Nigerians on the need for the Bill to be passed into Law.
This, he said, would facilitate the realization of the country’s dream of having a corruption-free society, where qualitative governance reigns supreme.

Responding, Mr. Iredia pledged the support of his agency in seeing to the realization of the objective and offered the services of the Agency’s officers in all the local government areas of the country to assist in disseminating the message contained in the Bill to the general population of Nigerians all over the country.

The advocacy visits continued the next day when the team met with officials of the Broadcasting Organization of Nigeria (BON) and Voice of Nigeria (VON); and the Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation.

They were received by the Executive Secretary of BON, Mr. Osita Nweke, other top officials of VON and the Ministry of Information who expressed strong support for the initiative on the Bill and pledged their willingness to assist in ensuring that the present National Assembly passes the Bill into law.

A roundtable discussion session with the public sector on the Freedom of Information Bill was also held on March 26. Those in attendance included Mrs. Maryam Uwais, a lawyer and wife of the Chief Justice of the Federation; Dr. Nana Tanko, country coordinator for the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA); Mr. Godwin Omole, Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Press Council, and the Nigerian Human Rights Commission’s Bukhari Bello.

Mr. Maxwell Kadiri presented a lead paper for discussion at the roundtable session which centered on the theme: “The Context and Content of the Freedom of Information Bill, Which Way Forward.” The presentation was then followed by a panel discussion.

The advocacy visits continued on March 27, when the team met with the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice as well as officials of the Federal Ministry of External Affairs.

At both meetings, the officials said they appreciated the need for the Bill and expressed their support for it. They, however, expressed some reservation about what they called the “wide powers” given by the Bill to the media, whose conduct, they claimed, had not been above reproach.

Members of the advocacy team explained to them that the Bill was not for the media alone but for the generality of Nigerians, arguing that it was crucial for the nation’s emancipation from the shackles of corruption and other corruption-related vices.

Media Groups Campaign For Equitable Access To The Media For Political Parties

The Media for Democracy Group (MFD) has issued a 13-point proposal for improving media coverage of elections in Nigeria as part of a wider initiative to ensure responsible and objective reportage of potentially volatile political issues.

The MFD, comprising Media Rights Agenda (MRA), the Independent Journalism Centre (IJC), Journalists for Democratic Rights (JODER) and the International Press Centre (IPC), in collaboration with an international non-governmental organisation, CREDO for Freedom of Expression and Associated Rights, which is based in Dakar and London, issued the proposal as part of a process to develop principles and guidelines for equitable access by the various political parties to the broadcast media during the period of electioneering campaigns and beyond.

The organisations addressed a joint press conference at the International Press Centre in Lagos on March 11 where they outlined their proposals for ensuring that all political parties have equitable access to the broadcast media in line with internationally agreed standards for election coverage.

In the joint press statement signed by Mr. Edetaen Ojo, MRA’s Executive Director; Mr. Sola Isola, Executive Director of the IJC; Mr. Adewale Adeoye, JODER’s Chairman; Mr. Tunde Aremu, the MIS Manager at IPC; and Mr. Rotimi Sankore, the Coordinator of CREDO, the organisations argued that following the legal victory that led to the existence of the current 30 political parties, it had become imperative to review the role of the media, especially the broadcast media, in the electoral process.

They said this was of critical importance given the capacity of the media and, in particular, the broadcast media to influence and shape public opinion.

In their view, the failure to carry out such a process in the past led to violent conflicts triggered off partly by the use of broadcast media to undermine election outcomes and democratic principles.
They cited the “Verdict 83” election programme on the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), which attracted a lot of criticism for its highly partisan coverage of the 1983 elections in favour of the incumbent National Party of Nigeria (NPN) government, arguing that “The importance of avoiding a repeat of such a scenario cannot be overstated considering Nigeria’s recent political history since the June 12, 1993 elections and the lessons learnt from events in other African countries such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, Zimbabwe and Cote D’Ivoire.”

They identified a major cause of the problem to be the tendency by those in power at both the federal and state levels to view the public broadcasting stations as the propaganda arms of their governments and to use them to advance partisan or personal interests while preventing access to these media by other stakeholders, including opponents and opposition parties.

The organisations said: “We believe that the broadcast media, particularly the publicly funded media, have an obligation not to be biased in their coverage of the political process, and in particular to give all parties equitable access as part of their social responsibilities to the society.”

They explained that since the government had neglected to carry out necessary reforms, the civil society has to live up to its role of safeguarding democratic principles, including ensuring an open, accountable, transparent and democratic electoral process.

The organisations said they planned to hold a conference of major stakeholders in an effort to develop an agreed set of standards for the coverage of the electioneering process by the broadcast media and that participants at the meeting would include representatives of the NTA and the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) at the federal and zonal levels; representatives of public broadcast media (radio and television) at state level; representatives of key private/independent media; representatives of all the 30 political parties; representatives of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC); representatives of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC); representatives of other various journalist associations and media bodies; as well as other stakeholders.

According to them, the key issues which need to addressed are how the editorial orientation and policies of the publicly funded broadcast media (radio and television) at the federal level, i.e. the NTA and the FRCN, as well as those of the publicly funded broadcast media controlled by the 36 state governments can be reviewed in order to ensure that they do not deny other political parties democratic visibility and that they are not used as mere propaganda arms of the ruling party.

They proposed for discussion and possible agreement by all stakeholders the following issues:

That all publicly funded broadcast media must, as part of their social responsibilities, commit themselves to giving regular and free air time to voter education programmes covering issues such as the voting process, venues, time of elections, the political parties and candidates running for elections.

That a limited number of brief and free slots for electoral campaign broadcasts be given to all political parties to outline their programmes and candidates for federal, state and local government elections. This is vital to voter education and will ensure that at least all parties and candidates are given the minimum visibility necessary for genuine democracy. This will be particularly important during the last month of the campaigns.

That a ceiling be placed on the total number of election campaign broadcasts that any one political party and its candidates can run over the period of the campaigns. This will prevent the outright buying of the elections by parties backed by richer members of society to the detriment of the poorer parties.

That no discounts be given to any one political party for paid election campaign broadcasts and that if discounts are given, they should not be selective, but should be across board and done in a fair and transparent manner.

That all campaign adverts must be ethical, decent and must avoid incitement, hate speech, and defamation.

That campaign adverts of any political party must not be rejected to the advantage of another party. Adverts may only be rejected if they fail to satisfy the requirements stated above.

That there must be a right of reply and correction for candidates that may have been defamed.

That the publicly owned media should not be used by incumbent political parties to attack other political parties, and in particular that government and party officials must not intervene in or undermine the editorial independence of the broadcast media. This will also cover opinion polls and election projections.
That the safety, physical security and job security of journalists, editorial and management staff of public and private media houses that exercise the right to editorial independence from political intervention must be guaranteed.

That the principles of fairness, balance and equitable news coverage of political party campaign activities be observed especially during major news broadcasts. This should include distinguishing between government activities and campaigns.

That there should be fair, balanced and equitable coverage of election debates.

That there should be no broadcast of any speculative results that may truncate the will of the electorate and lead to conflict or violence based on electoral disputes. Any results broadcast should at a minimum be based on results obtained from polling stations and agreed by agents of all parties present.

That disputed results should not be broadcast in such a manner that is inflammatory and could lead to violent conflict.

They argued that the issues were based on universally agreed standards for election coverage and the principles of relevant international instruments to which Nigeria subscribes.

The organisations, however, said they were in the interim constrained to condemn the widespread commercialization of political news, which they said was unprofessional and unethical. They called on media houses and individual journalists to desist from such a practice.

They also urged the editorial or management staff of publicly and privately owned broadcast media organisations in the country to discontinue their involvement in the campaign activities of any political party, particularly their inclusion on the campaign teams of political parties or candidates, stressing that media organisations must also ensure that all advertorials are clearly marked as such while sponsors of adverts must be named or mentioned.

They insisted that the media, particularly the publicly funded broadcast media, must not be used to undermine the democratic process, and called on all political parties, government officials, INEC, the NBC, the broadcast and print media, professional associations and unions within the media, and the rest of civil society to join them in preventing such an occurrence.

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MFWA Expresses Concern Over Safety Of 4 Liberian Journalists

The Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) has expressed concern about the safety of four Liberian journalists missing since the upsurge of fighting in the central and southeastern region of the country.

The journalists are Oscar Dolo, Nyan Flomo and William Quiwea of the Talking Drum Studio (TDS) and C.Y. Kwanue of The Inquirer newspaper. Their whereabouts remain unknown since fresh fighting erupted on March 24 in Ganta in Central Liberia and March 27 in Grand Gedeh County in the southeast.

The MFWA has appealed to the government of Liberia and the rebels Liberian United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) to look out for the journalists and ensure the safety of their lives and of all those caught up in the fighting.

Worldwatch Institute Publishes ‘State Of The World’ Report

The Worldwatch Institute has published the 20th edition of the State of the World: Progress Towards a Sustainable Society.

Published annually in 28 languages, State of the World contains detailed analysis and information and is relied upon by national governments, United Nations agencies, lawmakers, teachers and professionals.

Each year’s volume synthesizes developments in the natural and social sciences, in markets and in policy instruments, and describes how they will interact with the ecosystems on which our social fabric depends documenting the challenges and the grounds for hope.

This year’s edition covers: the growing threat of malaria; persistent poverty in the urbanized world; the destructive effects of mining; the rapid decline of global bird populations; new and sustainable energy technologies; gender, biodiversity and population; and the scope for collaboration between religious and environmental communities.

Vital Signs 2002-2003 distils 45 “vital signs” from thousands of governmental, industrial and scientific sources, to allow readers to track key indicators that show social, economic and environmental progress - or the lack of it. These include: Global warming, population growth, transgenic crops, HIV/AIDS, international trade, and the Internet.

Africa Advocacy Workshop Holds In June
The Youth Coalition (YC) and the Youth Against AIDS Network (YAAN) would host an Africa Advocacy Workshop aimed at young people working on issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights in Africa. It will take place from June 21 to 28 in Lusaka, Zambia.

The workshop will focus on enhancing the skills of young people working in this area to lobby and advocate for changes at national, regional or international level. In addition, the training will focus on building the capacity of participants to design and manage effective advocacy campaigns within their own communities aimed at changing attitudes or behaviours that negatively affect the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people.

The eight-day training will provide 30 young people from across Africa an opportunity to interact, learn from one another and establish continental connections that will assist them in their work. All selected applicants will be fully funded to attend the workshop.

YC and YAAN are interested in receiving applications only from those who:
♠ fall between the ages of 16 and 29
♠ are affiliated - either full-time or as a volunteer - to an organization working in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights (including HIV/AIDS)
♠ live and work in Africa

The deadline for applications is May 2, 2003. Selected applicants will be contacted by May 20. An application form for this workshop can be requested from: reach@youthcoalition.org and only application forms submitted by e-mail will be accepted.

African Commission Holds 33rd Session In Niamey in May
The African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights will hold its 33rd Ordinary Session in Niamey, Niger Republic, from May 15 to 29.

According to Mr. Germain Baricako, Secretary to the Commission, the session will take place at Palais des Congrès in Niamey.

The African Commission was established under the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, adopted in 1981 at the 18th summit of the Heads of State and Government of the then Organization of African Unity (OAU), and which entered into force five years later. The Commission, with its headquarters in Banjul, The Gambia, meets twice a year.

The 33rd session of the African Commission will be preceded by an NGO Forum, which will also take place in Niamey from May 2 to 4.

Organised by the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS), a Pan-African human rights organisation based in Banjul, The Gambia, the main objective of the Forum is to foster closer cooperation between non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the African Commission for promoting and protecting human rights in Africa.

Topics and theses to be discussed at the NGO Forum include the African Union, NEPAD, the African Commission, and Human Rights; the Human Rights Situation in Africa; Slavery and Child Trafficking in Africa; the Final Communiqué of the 32nd Ordinary Session of the African Commission and matters arising; and the Human Rights Dimension of HIV/AIDS in Africa.

AMARC Elects New International Board
The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) has elected new officers to its International Board to oversee the activities of the organisation for the next four years.
The new officers were elected at the Eighth World Assembly of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC8), held in Kathmandu, Nepal. AMARC 8 was attended by 260 delegates, representing more than 2000 community broadcasters around the world.

The new members of the International Board are: Steve Buckley (United Kingdom), President; Lynne Muthoni Wanyeki (Kenya), Deputy President; Elizabeth Robinson (United States), Treasurer; Maria Victoria Cabrera-Baleza (Philippines), Vice President for Women; Yaya Sangare (Mali), Vice President for Africa; and Bharat Koirala (Nepal), Vice President for Asia/Pacific.

The other officers are: Maria Suarez (Costa Rica), Vice President for Latin America and the Caribbean; George Christensen (The Gambia), Vice President; Frieda Werden (United States), Vice President; Stanley Stanis Kaka (Papua New Guinea), Vice President; Michelle Ndiaye Ntab (Senegal), Acting Secretary General.

IAPA Calls for Essay On Press Freedom

The Inter American Press Association (IAPA) as part of its 6th annual Chapultepec Essay Contest to raise awareness of press freedom and is seeking for the best piece of writing describing the importance of access to public information to participants’ lives.

The winner would receive a cash prize of US$2,500 and an invitation to attend a special ceremony during IAPA’s 59th General Assembly in Chicago in October. Everyone is eligible to enter the contest.

IAPA established the competition in 1998 and has awarded prizes to winners from the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Costa Rica, Brazil and the United States.


The essay must be no longer than 500 words and be received by 1 July.

Press Freedom Group Protests Libya’s Chairing of UN Human Rights Commission


As the session opened on March 17, RSF denounced what it described as “the farce represented by Libya holding the chair.” Members of the organisation threw thousands of leaflets at participants gathered in the meeting room at the United Nations office in Geneva as the new Libyan chairperson, Najat Al-Hajjaji, stated in her inaugural speech that “At last the UN has appointed someone who knows what she is talking about”.

RSF said with numerous cases of disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrests, detention without charge or trial, pervasive censorship, harassment of opponents’ families, Libya, elected to head the Commission on January 20, “knows a thing or two about the infringement of freedoms.”

The organisation wondered what credibility remained in a body directed by the representative of a country which abuses human rights every day.

It said: “With Libya at the helm, the Commission has just shown itself ready to cover up for the brutalities of some of its members through dirty deals. Libya’s holding of the chair is therefore the last straw. Without neglecting the high-quality work done by many special rapporteurs on the Commission, Reporters Without Borders nevertheless feels it is high time today to cease this fool’s game.”

RSF said for the first time in its history, it had decided that this year, it would submit any written or oral statement to the Commission.
Research Fellowship on African Youth in a Global Age 2003-2004

The Social Science Research Council (SSRC) and the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) are inviting applications for their 2003-4 programme for research fellowship and training on “Understanding Exclusion, Creating Value: African Youth in a Global Age.”

The programme is being conducted in partnership with the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and South Africa’s National Research Foundation (NRF). The theme for this year research programme is Youth, HIV/AIDS and Social Transformation.

They are inviting applications from junior researchers, whether academics, practitioners, or independent researchers. The fellowship includes support for field research and participation in pre and post-fieldwork workshops.

Approximately 12 research fellowships will be awarded this year. Funding for the programme is provided by the Education for Democracy and Development Initiative of the United States Agency for International Development, CODESRIA, the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA), and the NRF.

Fellows will attend a five-day orientation workshop prior to research (in October 2003), receive a research grant of up to US$10,000 for their field research, and attend a final workshop at the conclusion of their fieldwork.

Field research entails extensive original research (whether quantitative, qualitative, or a combination) that will produce new knowledge relevant to analysis and/or practice.

African researchers based in the region who hold at least a Masters degree and who are no more than five years beyond a Ph.D. are eligible for this programme. While the principal purpose of the programme is to support junior researchers and practitioners based in an African institution, a few fellowships are also available to Ph.D. candidates based in other regions, who seek field research funding for their dissertations.

Applications are due no later than Friday, May 2, 2003. Fellows will be notified in July, 2003. Applications will be accepted in English, French, and Portuguese and should include a research proposal (not more than 10 pages long), 2 letters of reference, graduate level academic transcripts, a detailed budget, a one page abstract summarizing your research agenda, and a comprehensive curriculum vitae.

More information may be obtained prior to submitting an application from the organisations’ websites at: www.ssrc.org and www.codesria.org. Questions should be directed to:

Funmi Vogt at the SSRC (Africa@ssrc.org), Tel: 212-377-2700 ext. 452, or Virginie Niang at Codesria (virginie.niang@codesria.sn), Tel: 221–825-9822/3, or Mpumi at the NRF (mpumi@nrf.ac.za), Tel: 27-12-481-4000.

Complete applications should be sent to any of the following: Social Science Research Council, Africa Program, 810 7th Avenue; 31st Floor, New York, NY 10019; or CODESRIA, Avenue Cheikh Anta Diop, Canal IV, BP 3304, Dakar, Senegal; or The Manager, Socio-Political Impact of Globalization: The Challenge for, National Research Foundation, P.O. Box 2600 PRETORIA, 0001, South Africa or Funmi E. Vogt, Africa Program, Social Science Research Council, 810 7th Avenue; 31st Floor, New York, NY 10019, Phone: 212-377-2700 ext. 452, Fax: 212-377-2727, Email: vogt@ssrc.org

WPFC To Hold Conference On Free Expression On The Internet

In response to the threat posed to press freedom on the Internet by proposals being considered for the United Nations sponsored World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in December, the World Press Freedom Committee (WPFC) is organising a conference aimed at rallying support against such proposals.

According to the WPFC, “Ideas advanced by states, intergovernmental bodies and non-governmental organisations for consideration at the Summit [include proposals that] would restrict Internet content to ‘ensure pluralism,’ support ‘development’ and limit ‘owners and exploiters’ rights.’ Such steps could threaten the free flow of Internet news and information.”

Sponsored by the WPFC and the Communications and Media Committee of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, the conference, whose theme is “Press Freedom on the Internet”, is scheduled to take place in New York from June 26 to 28.
The WPFC said the purpose of the conference was to “inform and mobilize online publishers and journalists, Internet service providers, media lawyers, political leaders and all others wishing to protect the free flow of information on the Net, ensuring that online news is not restricted by rules adopted to regulate the broader Internet.”

Observing that threats to press freedom on the Internet are real, the organisation said developments leading to the WSIS, scheduled to begin in December, indicate serious threats to the free flow of news on the Internet.

It noted that the proposals and ideas considered at United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in the 1970s and 1980s, which were partly responsible for the United State’s withdrawal from UNESCO, were re-emerging in the context of new technologies under discussion at the Summit.

WPFC argued that if the Summit were to legitimize notions such as a “right to communicate” and regulating information deemed harmful to national security, cultural values, privacy and morals, restrictions on the free flow of news on the Internet would surely follow.

It observed that there were restrictions already curbing Internet press freedom and cited Internet publisher, Huang Qi, who has been imprisoned in China for nearly two years, on charges of “dissemination of subversive information on the Internet”; Australia’s high court rules that Dow Jones can be sued in the Australian state of Victoria over an article that appeared on the Internet; Israel’s office of media censorship which warns online publishers not to print anything that could be deemed harmful to national security; and Police break into the Kuala Lumpur offices of Malaysiakini, confiscating the online publisher’s computer terminals.

The WPFC said its conference was designed to raise awareness of new threats to the free flow of Internet news; mobilize common action to vigorously oppose restrictive proposals; ensure that Internet journalists, new media and news and information providers remain free to inform people everywhere.

Participants at the conference will include online, print and broadcast journalists; media leaders; counsel to media; information service providers; and public policy makers.

The WPFC is therefore inviting journalists, media executives, lawyers, information service providers and public policy makers to the conference where it plans that a joint statement opposing any restrictions on Internet press freedom will be issued.

Investigative Journalism Conference to Launch Global Network

The US-based organisations, Investigative Reporters and Editors and Editors (IRE), is co-sponsoring the second global conference on investigative journalism scheduled to take place in Copenhagen, Denmark, in May.

The organisation plans to announce at the conference the formation of the world’s first network of investigative reporting associations.

Television journalists will showcase their work, while smaller groups will meet on international cooperation, training, electronic access, covering disasters and using school data.

Scheduled to take place May 1 to 4, the conference will feature speakers from 34 countries, including Nigeria. Speakers are drawn from among some of the world’s top investigative reporters. Panels will discuss topics ranging from journalists’ rights and censorship to investigating corruption and the business of war. Other issues include human trafficking, organized crime, public health and business investigations.

The programme is being sponsored by the Danish Association for Investigative Journalism, the Danish Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting, the Mid-Career Institute for Journalism (Denmark), the Danish School of Journalism, the European Journalism Centre, Grävände Journalister (Sweden), The Association for a Critical and Investigative Press (Norway), Investigative Journalists (Bulgaria), Vereniging van Onderzoeksjournalisten (Belgium/Netherlands), and Netzwerk Recherche (Germany).
**Time To Get Online Website Goes Live, Offers Learning Materials**

Kabissa, Space for Change in Africa, has launched a new web site (http://www.ttgo.kabissa.org) for its Time to Get Online project.

It is an Internet capacity-building project for West African civil society organisations that was launched in November 2002. Initially, it targeted organisations in West Africa whose main agenda concern human rights, freedom of information, responsive government and democratization.

A set of self-learning materials has been developed to help civil society activists and organisers to get online and to integrate the Internet into their organisations. The materials can be used as both a self-taught curriculum and as a reference guide for users with varying levels of Internet experience and expertise.

The materials are available for download for African civil society organisations. Local workshops serve as a supplement to the learning materials and give organisations the opportunity for hands-on learning.

Kabissa organized two Internet skill-building workshops for West African organisations working on issues of human rights, freedom of information, responsive government and democratisation in Lagos in February.

Participants at the workshops received free copies of the TIME TO GET ONLINE self-learning materials in print and CD-ROM. The learning materials developed over a period of three months were piloted in the workshops.

**World Movement for Democracy’s Third Assembly Postponed**

The World Movement for Democracy has postponed till next year its Third Assembly previously scheduled to take place in Durban, South Africa, from April 23 to 27, this year.

Announcing the postponement, the World Movement’s secretariat at the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in Washington said: “In light of the war in the Middle East and the uncertain international situation, and after consulting widely, the Steering Committee of the World Movement for Democracy regretfully decided on March 18 to postpone the World Movement’s Third Assembly, which was scheduled to take place on 23-27 April 2003, in Durban, South Africa.”

It explained that the decision to postpone the Assembly was taken after it became clear that war was imminent and that such a decision could not wait any longer.

According to the World Movement, “Weighing the risks of proceeding with the Assembly in April against the costs of postponing it was a very difficult and painful process that had to be undertaken in a very brief space of time.”

It said the Third Assembly would be re-scheduled to take place in Durban, “within the next year or so”.

The Steering Committee urged participants, in the meantime, to use the additional time to develop networking activities that will make the Assembly even richer and more productive.

The Secretariat said it would announce the re-scheduled dates of the Assembly as soon as they are known.

**African Media Forum Schedules Second Meeting for May**

The African Media Forum will meet in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in May to formulate recommendations on the role of the media in the Information Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D) in Africa initiative.

The two-day meeting, tentatively scheduled for May 15, will attempt to base its recommendations on the outcomes of the global Media Forum discussions at the Second Global Knowledge Conference (GKII).

ICT4D seeks to convene at least 50 of Africa’s leading policy leaders in television, radio and print media.
Anyone interested in participating, or making submissions, may contact the Global Knowledge Partnership Secretariat in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on telephone (+603-8) 996-2379 or via email on gkps@gkpsecretariat.org.my

The Global Knowledge Partnership’s website can be visited at: http://www.gkpsecretariat.org.my

**World’s Press Meets In Dublin On Challenges To The Industry**

The world’s press will meet in Dublin, Ireland, in June at the 56th World Newspaper Congress and the 10th World Editors Forum to deliberate on how to ensure editorial excellence in hard times and explore winning strategies for the new business environment.

The World Newspaper Congress, taking place from June 8 to 11, is conceived as a “total” newspaper event, which will bring together publishers, chief executives, managing directors, editors – and the most ambitious managers from all levels of the industry, including suppliers of services to newspapers.

According to the World Association of Newspapers (WAN), which is organizing the events, there appears to be no end in sight to the advertising drought hitting most of the industrialized world with the result that the decline in advertising revenues, which has been quite drastic in some countries, has forced new cuts in newspaper personnel, accelerated the search for new operating efficiencies and brought sharply into focus the need to make Internet and other new distribution channels pay for themselves.

WAN notes that many in the industry believe that the current challenges, whether financial, managerial or technical, require new newspaper business models to ensure success and prosperity in the coming years.

It insists that there is a growing conviction that the areas for greatest innovation, change, growth and profit may well lie in the core business of the newspaper, in concentrating on the fundamentals such as how much more energy should be devoted to cost-cutting, for example, without disrupting the development of new core business?

The search for new models that can produce more potential and more profit from the business will lie at the heart of the presentations and discussions at the 56th World Newspaper Congress.

A line-up of leading newspaper chief executives is being brought together to explain their strategies.

WAN also plans to roll out the new developments in its major project on “Shaping the Future of the Newspaper”, to provide Congress participants with the most successful ideas from its research into excellence and cutting-edge practise in the global newspaper community.

The conference will provide a panorama of trends and innovations in the press world-wide and an opportunity for participants to meet and network with colleagues in the newspaper business from every culture, region and major market.

The World Editors Forum, which will similarly take place between June 8 and 11, is also being planned as a celebration of the 10th anniversary of the annual event. It will examine the challenges of achieving editorial excellence and increased efficiency in the newsroom.

The World Editors Forum, the only annual global event focusing on editorial issues, is designed for chief editors and other senior news executives in the newspaper industry.

According to WAN, the demands to develop the newspaper’s core business, providing the public with news, analysis, background and the perspective to facilitate public discussion, are higher now than ever.

Presentations at the conference will therefore focus on successful, new and creative editorial initiatives, on how to develop the best newsroom, and on combining journalistic excellence with efficiency through a combination of editorial and financial leadership.

Controversial subjects such as the use of customer relationship management in the newsroom and “editorial measurement” will also be on the agenda.

Issues that will be examined at the conference include charging for online news, selling news on mobile devices, making the most out of both static and dynamic content.
These issues will be demonstrated and discussed, following up on last year’s discussions on convergence and multi-media platforms. There will also be debate about the regulations on privacy and technology that presently set borders for the newspaper.

WAN notes that newsrooms in many regions of the world face challenges much more acute even than the economic environment. Such challenges include harassment, violence, raids by police or bandits, the jailing or murder of journalists.

The conference is therefore also intended to give participants the opportunity to discuss these conditions directly with their professional colleagues who are managing to publish their newspapers in spite of the persecution.

**Press Freedom Suppressed In 2002 In The Name Of Terror, Says IPI**

One year after the September 11 terrorists attacks in the United States, the “war on terrorism” continues to affect freedom of the press across the globe, the International Press Institute (IPI) has said in its 2002 World Press Freedom Review.

The IPI’s World Press Freedom Review 2002 documents the growing evidence of the impact of war on terrorism’s on press freedom around the world. The report records 54 journalists killed and press freedom violations in 176 countries and territories during the period.

The IPI said in the report: “Across the globe, governments have used the war to justify their own short-term interests. While some additional security measures have been legitimate, many countries have enacted restrictive laws, reduced the free flow of information, arrested journalists, closed media outlets and suppressed dissenters, all in the name of terrorism.”

It noted that with 10 journalists killed in Europe, press freedom is under pressure, particularly in eastern Europe, where governments victimize the media, adding that “Almost every country in Europe has introduced new anti-terrorism laws after September 11 and a number have inhibited the media’s work. In Russia, where eight journalists were killed, a new draft law seeks to regulate the media during an attack by terrorists.”

According to the IPI, in Asia, with 13 journalists murdered, the governments of Indonesia and the Philippines have proposed new anti-terrorism measures while, in Malaysia, the war on terrorism undermined efforts to repeal the notorious Internal Security Act.

It said after securing the favour of the United States in the war on terrorism, countries such as Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan suppress the media with impunity, while terrorists and security forces in Nepal also deliberately targeted the media this year, although there were improvements in Sri Lanka.

The IPI observed that fuelled by conflict in Palestine and Israel, seven journalists were killed in the Middle East and North Africa, where countries routinely stifle dissent and free speech.

It said in Iran, the struggle between conservatives and reformers has led to the closure of publications and harsh prison sentences for journalists, adding that Jordan has used the war on terrorism to tighten its restrictive penal laws while Tunisia and Saudi Arabia remain reluctant to loosen their grip on the Internet.

In its view, confronted by famine and wars, the problems of Africa, where two journalists were killed, transcend the war on terrorism as leaders of impoverished countries seek new ways to stay in power and their political parties are resistant to either change or opposition.

But the IPI stressed that the Americas is still the most dangerous region in the world with 22 journalists killed, 15 of them by left- and right-wing terrorists in Colombia.

It noted that in the United States, growing surveillance and enforcement powers to combat terrorism have raised fears over the balance struck between security and liberty; while Venezuela and other Latin American countries contain groups united in their hatred of the media.

Besides, it said, a deepening recession and taxation problems also concern the media in the Americas, while elsewhere, in Canada, worries exist that powerful media owners are exercising ultimate editorial control.

The IPI argued that although no journalists were killed in the Australasian and Oceanic region, the influence of traditional kings and local politicians remained ever present. It said the media are often prevented from reporting critically and even excluded from some territories.
President Buyoya Bars Radio Stations From Airing Rebel Statements

President Pierre Buyoya of Burundi has barred all private radio stations from airing statements or interviews with two rebel groups still at war with the government according to information from the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and Reporters Without Borders (Reporters sans frontières, RSF).

President Buyoya at a meeting with the editors of Radio Publique Africaine (RPA), Radio Bonesha and Radio Isanganiro on March 4, warned them not to broadcast interviews with or paraphrase statements made by the National Liberation Force (FNL) and the Forces for the Defense of Democracy (FDD) while the groups remained at war with the government. He said it was “unacceptable for rebels who continue to kill to have access to the airwaves.” He however did not say whether there would be penalties should the radio stations ignore his order.

The FNL is reported to be the only ethnic Hutu rebel group that has not yet signed a cease-fire agreement with Buyoyo’s transitional government. The FDD signed a peace accord in December 2002 but fighting between the group and armed forces has since resumed.

RSF has protested the censorship. In Burundi, radio is the country’s main source of news.

MRA Launches Media Access Programme For Disadvantaged Groups

In a bid to ensure broader participation in media debates on the political process and the April general elections, Media Rights Agenda (MRA) launched a civic education programme aimed at giving the disadvantaged members of the society a voice in the media.

The project began with a one-day meeting between journalists from different media organizations, cutting across print and broadcast, and leaders of traditionally excluded civil society sector groups such as students, market men and women, mechanics, butchers, motorcyclists, furniture makers, drivers, artisans and other non-elite members of the society.

The meeting, held at the Training Centre of Chemical and Allied Products Plc in Ikeja, Lagos, was attended by 15 journalists and 45 leaders of civil society sector groups.

Chaired by the President, National Woodcraft Carpentry and Furniture Makers Association of Nigeria, Chief Moses Olusegun, the meeting provided a platform for representatives of these civil society groups to engage media professionals over their exclusion from the media debates and to reach an understanding of how they can access the media.

In a welcome address at the meeting, Mr. Osaro Odemwingie, senior programme officer at MRA, told the participants that the project arose out of the organisation’s observation that in the build up to this month’s general elections, only the views of the elite members of the society were being reflected in the media to the detriment of grass roots people and members of the civil society.

Insisting that members of the civil society and grassroots people often have very strong and positive views on the political processes, he said since Nigeria belongs to all citizens everyone was a stakeholder in the political process and ought to be able to participate in it, including by airing their views.

Mr. Odemwingie noted that in order to ensure that every sector of the country had an opportunity, as much as possible, to participate fully in the ongoing political process and make inputs to the discourse on how to achieve sustainable democracy in Nigeria, MRA decided to create a forum for media practitioners and members of the civil society and grassroots organisations to talk to each other.

In the discussion that followed, participants from the civil society groups unanimously criticized the tendency of the media to deny them access saying that they had been sidelined from actively participating in the political process for a number of reasons.

They claimed that many journalists harboured the notion that people in their sectors were not intelligible enough to make meaningful contributions to the discussions on the political process and accused the media professionals of monetising access to the media with the result that only the wealthy and elitist members of the society are able to use the media.
The participants complained that many of them who had in the past made attempts to pass across their views on important national issues have been unable to do this. Besides, they said, the media appeared only interested in sensational and violent events while neglecting developmental issues. They alleged that journalists no longer do investigative reporting with the result that many of their reports are speculative.

Some of the participants alleged that even when an issue is sensational, journalists would refuse to report it if it negatively affects the interest of a wealthy individual. But they commended journalists and the media generally for largely spear-heading the struggle which brought about the present democratic dispensation, although they accused them of thereafter losing their courage to the extent that they are no longer able to report or focus on issues which could annoy the government.

The participants expressed worry that unlike situations in past elections in Nigeria whereby candidates seeking elective positions go out to campaign for votes and often won based largely on the number of votes secured at the election, these days candidates are imposed on electorates. Denying allegations that they usually request money to reflect the views of grassroot people, journalists expressed their frustration in attempting to get information from grassroots people.

Many of the journalists present explained that very often when they approach such people for information or for their views on national issues, they usually turned away on the excuse that the government may arrest them afterwards if they say anything critical of the government.

The journalists appealed to grassroots people to change their attitude towards journalists, stressing that journalists should be seen as friends and not enemies.

Mr. Adebanjo Adegbenro, a Senior Assistant Editor and Head of the Political Desk at Tell magazine, explained in detail the editorial policies and orientation of media houses and how grassroots people can access the media easily. He explained that people need to understand the ownership structure, interest and coverage area of a media organization in order to know how to access it.

For instance, he explained that the interest of a national newspaper would be different from that of a local newspaper as would be the interest of a private newspaper against that of a publicly funded newspaper. He argued that it was unlikely that any state funded media establishment would carry a story critical of that government.

Mr. Adegbenro advised grassroots people to always ask questions about how they are being governed and enjoined them to always go to media houses and make reports any time. He likened media houses to police stations, saying they are open to everybody 24 hours of the day.

He explained that one of the few instances where journalists could decline to report a story would be if it could result in a court action being instituted against them which they might not be able to defend. He assured the participants that journalists are obliged to protect the confidentiality of their sources of information, and can only reveal the identity of the source with his or her permission.

He therefore advised civil society and grassroots people that they could also write anonymous letters where they have sufficient reason to believe that they could be in danger if they revealed their identities, adding that such letters should contain sufficient information that would enable a journalist to investigate the allegations.

Mr. Adegbenro suggested to the participants that they could write letters to editors or issue press statement on their organisation’s letter-headed paper as these would receive more attention from the media houses.

He also advised them to organize peaceful demonstrations to media outlets if the need arises, but suggested that to be more effective, they should send prior notices to the editor and have designated spokespersons to articulate their views. He added that demonstrators should always carry placards with short but concise messages giving information about their grouse and their demands.

At the end of the discussions, the participants agreed that grassroots people should not allow themselves to be used by politicians to perpetrate violence during the elections and that they should always ask questions about how they are being governed, and where the government is not performing, to ask why.

After the meeting, MRA purchased airtime on EKO 89.75 FM radio station in Lagos for a weekly 30-minute discussion programme titled: “Grassroots Voices” where different persons from these
sectors of civil society were featured every week to discuss political issues on various aspects of the political process and elections on each of the programmes.

The discussions are frequently conducted in pidgin so as to make it possible for members of these target groups to participate effectively. The discussions are geared towards ensuring a broader debate on political issues beyond the elitist class. The programme is designed with the expectation that representatives of groups in these sectors will be best placed to mobilise their members. The programme was aired between 8.05 p.m. and 8.35 p.m. every Friday.

MRA also purchased airtime on Lagos Television (LTV) in Ikeja, Lagos for yet another weekly 30-minute discussion programme similarly titled: “Grassroots Voices”. This programme was aired between 7.00 pm and 7.30 p.m. every Sunday. The programme was aired live and allowed listeners to phone in to make contributions.

The programmes were carried out with support from the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under the “Heading Towards 2003 Elections” project funded by the European Union (EU) and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom.

**Index On Censorship Honours ‘Al Jazeera’**

The London-based Index on Censorship (INDEX) has given a free-expression award to the Qatar-based satellite news network “Al Jazeera” for its “courage in circumventing censorship and contributing to the free exchange of information in the Arab world.”

INDEX said Al Jazeera’s willingness to give opposition groups a high-profile platform has made it the most popular station in the Middle East but also led Arab and US governments to try and muzzle its reporting.

INDEX also honoured Iranian professor and journalist Hashem Aghajari; former Australian ambassador to Cambodia Tony Kevin and British reporter Fergal Keane with awards.

According to INDEX, Aghajari was sentenced to death in November 2002 for advocating religious reform in a speech he made earlier in June. He was given 74 lashes and banned from teaching for 10 years. A court recently quashed the sentence and ordered a re-trial.

INDEX named Kevin its International Whistleblower of the Year for exposing the Australian government’s cover-up of the sinking of Siev-X, a boat containing mostly Iraqi refugees, near Sumatra, Indonesia, in October 2001. Three hundred and fifty three people, including 100 children, died in the incident.

Although the Australian government publicly denied any responsibility for the incident, Kevin’s investigation revealed that authorities knew the boat sank in international waters but refused to intervene. The incident occurred one week after the government launched a programme to actively discourage asylum seekers from entering Australia.

Meanwhile, INDEX recognised Zimbabwe’s Minister of Information, Jonathan Moyo, for “services to censorship,” saying Moyo “spins misinformation that denies the widespread use of detention without trial and torture and the corrupt misappropriation of land by (President Robert) Mugabe’s cronies.”

**Global Network Identifies 700 Information Sources For AIDS Professionals**

The International AIDS Economics Network (IAEN) has identified over 700 best information resources available to AIDS professionals worldwide based on a survey of its members in 130 countries.

The IAEN said it recently polled its members in 130 countries about the best information resources available to AIDS professionals worldwide and that the exercise returned 85 completed surveys from 32 countries listing over 700 information resources.

According to the Network, approximately half of the returned surveys were from developed countries, while the other half were from developing countries.
It said the results of the survey suggest several conclusions, namely that:
While there are a large number of resources addressing global AIDS, only one - UNAIDS - has a notable reach. Most of the top twenty resources, each of which has very useful information, are not widely cited.
Overall the number of resources listed in each survey was relatively few (only 8 per survey). This suggests that AIDS resources are poorly developed compared to other policy (or business) topics.
AIDS professionals are very fragmented in where they go for information. This has significant implications for coordination of an informed global response to AIDS.
But it noted that on balance, the 700 resources cited provide a good portrait of the “information infrastructure” that informs and coordinates the global response to AIDS, although the infrastructure appears to be both thin and fragmented.
This, IAEN said, represents one of the most important obstacles to an effective response to the AIDS epidemic.
A full report from this survey can be found at IAEN’s website on: http://www.iaen.org/files.cgi/9821_iaen_survey_summary.pdf.

**INEC Launches Website For Elections**

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has, for the first time in the history of the country, launched a website where it plans to transmit results from this months general elections to the public as soon as they are available. The website can be accessed at: http://www.inecnigeria.org.

INEC’s chairman, Dr. Abel Guobadia, told journalists in Abuja at the launch of the website that election results, press releases and other vital information will be posted on the site.

Results will come into INEC headquarters in Abuja from the 36 states during the April 12 National Assembly elections and the April 19 presidential and gubernatorial polls. From there, results will simultaneously go to the new Media Results Centre which INEC has established for the dissemination of results and be posted on the Internet.

Dr. Guobadia said: “There is a saying that information is power. By making information widely available to the people, INEC is helping to empower Nigerians.”

One highlight on the site is a map of Nigeria. Users can click on the map in order to access results on a state-by-state basis. For the April 19 elections, results will be posted for each Local Government Area as they become available. The millions of Nigerians abroad are also expected to take an interest in the new site as it will help them follow the election results. Users will also be able to post comments on the site and discuss the elections through a real time bulletin board. In addition to results, the site will post news releases, statements from INEC and background material on INEC’s role in ensuring the progress of Nigerian democracy.

The British Department for International Development (DFID) funded the establishment of the website, which was developed by the United Nations Electoral Assistance (UNEAD) Programme, which worked closely with INEC.

**Centre African Holds 11th Training Course on International Human Rights Procedures**


The main objective of the course, the 11th in the series, is to build the capacities of young human rights activists, on the use of regional and international instruments and mechanisms to promote and protect human rights in Africa.

The course anticipates that participants would seize their governments and relevant national, regional or global human rights institutions on issues regarding the rights of women in their countries, and also embark on human rights education programmes.
The course is conducted in both English and French with simultaneous interpretations. It comprises general lectures, debates, simulation sessions, round table discussions etc, that focus on the African Human Rights System, the United Nations Human Rights System and International Human Rights Law.

Other topics such as the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and what they hold for the African woman would also be analysed, along with the human rights aspects of HIV/Aids in Africa.

Participants in the course must, among other things, be between the ages of 25 and 40 years, must have at least one year experience in human rights work, must occupy a position relevant to the training and as such demonstrate the ability to make use of the course in his or her work, must be able to write and speak fluently in either English or French.

ATTACKS ON THE PRESS IN MARCH 2003

CPU Pays Tribute to 12 Media Men Killed in Iraq

The Commonwealth Press Union (CPU) has paid tribute to 12 media professionals who died in Iraq when United States-led coalition forces attacked the country, the journalists are:

March 22: PAUL MORAN, 39, a freelance cameraman on assignment for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), was killed when a car bomb exploded next to him near the village of Khurmal in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq. Kurdish officials blamed the apparent suicide attack on a militant group, Ansar al-Islam, which has been accused of links with Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaeda network. A fellow Australian journalist, Eric Campbell, suffered minor shrapnel wounds in the blast.

March 22: TERRY LLOYD, 50, a veteran correspondent for the British Independent Television Network (ITN), was killed by “friendly fire” near Basra in southern Iraq. Two members of his news crew, French cameraman Fred Nerac and Jordanian translator Hussein Osman, were reported missing. The fourth member of the team, cameraman Daniel Demoustier, who escaped with injuries, said the crew’s two vehicles were hit by “friendly fire” from U.S. or British forces aiming at two nearby vehicles carrying about a dozen Iraqi soldiers.

March 30: GABY RADO, 48, foreign correspondent for “Channel 4 News”, London, UK, was found dead at a hotel in Suleimaniya, northern Iraq. It is believed that he fell from the roof of the Abu Sanaa Hotel into the car park below, where his body was found, and that there was no direct connection with any military action.

April 2: KAVEH GOLESTAN, 52, an Iranian freelance cameraman on assignment for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), was killed in northern Iraq when he stepped on a land mine as he climbed out of his car near the town of Kifri. He was travelling as part of a four-person BBC crew that included producer Stuart Hughes, Tehran bureau chief Jim Muir, and a local translator. Hughes injured his foot and was later treated by U.S. military medics. Muir and the translator suffered light cuts.

April 4: MICHAEL KELLY, 46, editor-at-large of The Atlantic Monthly and a columnist for The Washington Post, was killed in a Humvee accident while riding with the U.S. Army’s 3rd Infantry Division south of Baghdad airport. Kelly, who had also served as editor of The New Republic and The National Review, was the first American journalist killed while covering the war.

April 6: DAVID BLOOM, 39, a correspondent for NBC News, died of a pulmonary embolism while travelling with the U.S. Army’s 3rd Infantry Division outside Baghdad. Bloom, who had no apparent health problems, had been co-anchor of the weekend edition of the “Today” programme since March 2000. Dehydration and sleeping in confined quarters may have been risk factors, doctors said.

April 6: KAMARAN ABDURAZAQ MUHAMED, a Kurdish translator working for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), was killed by “friendly fire” after a U.S. F15 fighter jet dropped a bomb on a convoy of Kurdish troops and U.S. special forces who were travelling near the city of Mosul in northern Iraq. Two BBC journalists, world affairs editor John Simpson and producer Tom Giles, were also injured. At least 18 people were reportedly killed in the incident.

April 7: JULIO ANGUITA PARRADO, 32, a correspondent for the Spanish daily newspaper El Mundo, and CHRISTIAN LIEBIG, 35, a correspondent for the German news magazine
FOCUS, were killed during a rocket attack on the U.S. Army’s 3rd Infantry Division outside Baghdad. Two U.S. soldiers were also killed in the attack.

April 8: TAREK AYOUB, a cameraman and correspondent for the Qatar-based satellite television network Al-Jazeera, was killed during a U.S. air raid on Baghdad. Ayoub, a Jordanian citizen, died in hospital after he was wounded in the strike, which set ablaze Al-Jazeera’s office near the Information Ministry, the network said. Another member of Al-Jazeera’s Baghdad crew, Zohair al-Iraqi, was wounded in the attack.

April 8: TARAS PROTSYUK, a cameraman with Reuters was killed when a US missile hit the 15th Floor of the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad, where most foreign journalists were based.

April 8: JOSE COUSO, a cameraman with Telesinco, Spain was killed when a US missile hit the 15th Floor of the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad, where most foreign journalists were based.


The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) said last month that the number of journalists behind bars rose sharply in 2002 although heightened awareness of journalist’s safety and a decline in the number of global conflicts last year contributed to a decrease in the number of journalists killed for their work.

In its annual survey of press freedom conditions around the world, the CPJ said the “Coverage of the Gulf War, has increased public awareness of the risks that journalists take to report the news.”

CPJ’s acting director Joel Simon, said: “But we must also remember that journalists in places like Colombia, Haiti, Zimbabwe, Russia, and China confront violence and government repression every day in order to do their jobs.”

‘Attacks on the Press in 2002’ documents some 500 cases of media repression in 120 countries, including assassination, assault, imprisonment, censorship, and legal harassment.

In documenting these attacks, the CPJ’s report noted several trends, namely:

· For the second year in a row, the number of journalists in prison rose sharply. There were 136 journalists in jail at the end of 2002, a 15 percent increase from 2001 and a shocking 68 percent increase since the end of 2000, when only 81 journalists were imprisoned. China, already the world’s leading jailer of journalists for the fourth year in a row, arrested five more, ending the year with a total of 39 journalists behind bars. In Eritrea, 18 journalists languish behind bars, and 16 journalists were incarcerated in Nepal.

· A total of 19 journalists were killed worldwide as a direct result of their work in 2002, a sharp decrease from 2001 when 37 were killed. It is the lowest number of journalists killed in the line of duty since CPJ began tracking the deaths in 1985. Most of the journalists killed in 2002 were not covering conflicts but were instead murdered in direct reprisal for their reporting on sensitive topics, including official crime and corruption in countries such as Colombia, the Philippines, Russia, and Pakistan.

· Government officials invoked “national security” concerns to impose new restrictions on the press and limit access to certain conflicts. In the West Bank, journalists covering the Israeli military incursion there were harassed, denied access to “closed military areas,” and three journalists were killed by Israeli gunfire. Russian authorities also cracked down on the media during and after the October hostage crisis, when Chechen rebels seized a Moscow theater. Authorities threatened journalists for interviewing hostage-takers and for questioning the government’s action.

The CPJ said although the number of journalists behind bars rose in 2002, there were some positive trends in press freedom worldwide. In Mozambique, six men were convicted in January of murdering investigative reporter Carlos Cardoso. Three Palestinian journalists detained without charge during the Israeli military’s April offensive in the West Bank were released. Imprisoned Russian journalist Grigory Pasko was also released early this year before completing his full term.

Explaining the reason for the CPJ’s yearly documentation of attacks on the press, Simon said: “Journalists are most vulnerable when they are invisible. The best way to fight impunity is by documenting and denouncing abuses against our colleagues.”

Editor Alleges Threat to Life, Writes Police Commissioner

Mr. Emeka Okoroanyanwu, the Editor of Maritime Quarterly, alleged last month that his life and the lives of other management staff of the magazine were being threatened by unidentified persons. He told newsmen in Lagos that threats to his life began in the second week of March following the circulation of the company’s latest edition.
He said: “Since last week, our staff have noticed the presence of certain strange characters around our offices and the neighborhood. One of these characters has, on two occasions entered our offices to make funny enquiries about the ownership and editorial leadership of the company.”

Mr. Okoroanyanwu said in addition to the “strange visitation”, they have been receiving strange calls from men who warn them to “desist from publishing nonsense” or hold themselves responsible for whatever happens to them.

The Editor suspected that these intimidations might be as a result of the contents of the current edition of the magazine.

Okoroanyanwu said he had already reported the matter to the Lagos State Police Commissioner for necessary action.

**NBC Closes Broadcast Station, Threatens to Sanction Two Others**

The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) shut down the Kano offices of Daar Communications, owners of Ray Power Radio and Africa Independent Television (AIT), last month and threatened to sanction two other stations.

The two other stations are the Edo State government-owned Edo Broadcasting Service (EBS) and the privately owned Independent Television (ITV) both located in Benin City, the State capital. They were accused of breaching the National Broadcasting Code issued by the Commission.

The Kano offices of Daar Communications were shut down on March 13 and its premises sealed off by men of the Kano State Police command. Consequently, both Ray Power FM radio station, the only independent radio station in Kano State, and its sister television station, AIT went off air.

The officer in charge of the Daar Communications’ Kano FM Radio station, Mallam Abubakar Sadiq, told journalists that men of the state police command swooped on the premises and ordered the staff to shut down transmission. He said the Police did not present any letter from NBC, but only said they were acting on orders from above.

But Mr. Joseph Agbo, the zonal director of NBC, said in a statement in Kaduna that the NBC ordered the stations shut because they violated section 2 of the National Broadcasting Commission Act No. 38 of 1992 which states that “No person shall operate or use any apparatus or premises for the transmission of sound or vision by cable, television, radio, satellite or any other medium of broadcast from anywhere in Nigeria except under and in accordance with the provisions of this Act.”

Mr. Mark Ojiah, the Head of NBC’s Public Affairs, also claimed that Daar Communications’ operation in Kano was illegal, explaining that the company only has licenses to operate from Lagos and Abuja. He said the station had defied a previous order to shut down.

The company however resumed broadcasting on March 15, and began transmission from Kaduna as well.

In Edo State, the NBC gave the managements of both the Edo Broadcasting Service and the Independent Television until the afternoon of April 3 to stop airing some alleged offensive political advertisements or risk sanction.

The Benin Zonal Director of the NBC, Mr. Olufemi Ayeni, said the two media houses broke the rules on political advertisements and threatened that the NBC would impose tough sanctions on them if they do not make appropriate amend.

He regretted that after a meeting with the managements of the stations, following which they withdrew some of the alleged offensive adverts, they subsequently resumed airing them.

The All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) gubernatorial candidate in the State, Senator Rowland Owie, had petitioned the NBC over some adverts, which he alleged were libelous being broadcast on the stations.

Edo State is ruled by Governor Lucky Igbinedion of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), whose family also owns the private Independent Television, creating a virtual monopoly of broadcasting facilities in the State.

The secretary of the ANPP in the State, Mr. Chris Nehikhare, said the party had also instituted legal action against the two stations and petitioned the NBC over the refusal of the EBS TV to air jingle from the party sent to it.
He showed journalists copies of the reply from the EBS management which stated that the jingles could not be aired until the station received clearance from relevant authorities. The letter, signed by the General Manager, T.S.B. Ebozoje, was dated March 27.

Denial of equitable access to political parties by State broadcast stations has been the hallmark of the on-going political campaigns in spite of calls by the NBC, non-governmental organisations and Nigerians generally for this tendency to be reversed.

Youths Attack Journalists

Three journalists escaped being lynched by angry Kalabari youths on March 5 at the Royal Plaza Hotel, in Port Harcourt where they had gone to seek information following the assassination of Dr. Marshal Harry, chieftain of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP).

The journalists, Emmanuel Ugwu, a senior correspondent of The Punch newspaper, Kelvin Ebiri, a correspondent of The Guardian and a photo journalist, Femi Makinde, had joined other sympathizers to keep vigil at the office located in the premises of the hotel. But an attempt by Makinde to take the photograph of one of the weeping sympathizers drew the anger of the Kalabari youth, who descended on him.

The youths beat up Makinde severely, seized his digital camera and snatched his mobile phone. Attempts by Makinde’s colleagues Ugwu and Ebiri to rescue him only earned them the wrath of the youths who descended on them and continued to push and hit them ordering them to leave the premises of the hotel.

The timely intervention of Mr. Olobo Harry saved the lives of the journalists.

MEDIA / PRESS FREEDOM AWARDS

JAAIDS Honours Journalists, Media Houses for AIDS Coverage

Eleven individual journalists and media organizations were presented with plaques, certificates and cash prizes in Lagos last month for their outstanding work in breaking the silence surrounding HIV/AIDS.

At the 2002 Red Ribbon Awards on HIV/AIDS ceremony held at the NiteShift Coliseum in Ikeja, the Lagos-based non-governmental organisation, Journalists Against Aids (JAAIDS), honoured individuals and organizations within and outside the media, who, in the past year, excelled in public communication of HIV/AIDS prevention, care and control in Nigeria.

Professor Babatunde Osotimehin, Chair of the National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA), was among over 140 guests that graced the occasion. Jika Attoh and Jire Kola-Kuforiji, popular TV talk show hosts, co-compered the programme. Citations of winners were read by Declan Okpalaeye, 2001 CNN African Journalist of the Year.

There were a total of 11 winners in 11 broad categories. Sefy Megafu of ThisDay newspapers won the prize for Best Individual Reporting of HIV/AIDS (Newspaper). Megafu’s stories, published between November 2001 and November 2002, were described by the judges as “well researched with a human angle and a focus on Persons Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs) and how they are affected by different HIV/AIDS issues”.

In the category of Best Corporate Coverage in the Newspaper category, The Guardian emerged winner, beating Post Express by just one mark.

Nneka Okoli of The Week Magazine, for the second time running, won the award for Best Individual Reporting of HIV/AIDS in the Magazine category. She beat her colleague, Gregory Page–Nwakunor to the prize. A combination of their efforts at The Week placed the magazine ahead of runner-up The News magazine in the Best Corporate Coverage Category (Magazine).

Constance Umeh of RayPower 100 FM radio and Siju Alabi of Channels Television stood out amongst the pack of entries from the electronic medium as they clinched the awards for Best Individual Reporting of HIV/AIDS in radio and television categories respectively.

No awards were given for radio and television stations in the corporate coverage category. The organisers explained that entries received in the categories were too few, and tended to reflect a
lackadaisical attitude on the part of broadcast stations’ management to the awards and HIV/AIDS coverage in general.

For his series of cartoons in the Sunday Punch titled ‘Let’s talk about HIV/AIDS’, Wilson Akwaowo won the prize for Best Individual Cartoon Coverage. Akwaowo’s prize also gave Sunday Punch the Prize for Best Cartoon Coverage in the corporate category. The prize was an all-Punch affair as Sunday Punch had The Punch as closest rival.

The prize for Best Newspaper Editorial on HIV/AIDS went to Vanguard newspaper. The award panel found Vanguard’s editorials well written and reflecting a good grasp of HIV/AIDS issues. The judges however frowned at the newspaper’s use of stigmatizing languages such as ‘AIDS carriers’ and ‘AIDS victims’.

Perhaps the two most outstanding awards presented that night were the Breakers of Silence Awards, presented to Samaila Garba of the Kebbi Alliance of Positive People (KAPOP) in the individual category and the Centre for the Right to Health (CRH) in the corporate category.

The Breakers of Silence awards honour organizations and individuals within or outside the media, whose actions and pronouncements have contributed significantly to breaking the silence surrounding HIV/AIDS and have encouraged open discussions on issues surrounding the epidemic.

Samaila Garba, who is HIV-positive, received loud applause as he stepped out to receive the award for his fearless and painstaking work raising HIV/AIDS consciousness among communities in Kebbi State in northern Nigeria, where religion and tradition have fostered a culture of denial about the epidemic.

The Centre for the Right to Health also shone like a thousand stars for its innovative work in using a human rights perspective to confront the stigma and discrimination and improving access to treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria.

Each of the awardees got a specially-designed Red Ribbon plaque, certificate and a cash prize of between 25,000 and 30,000 naira. Prizes were sponsored by the National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA), the Ford Foundation and the Promoting Sexual and Reproductive Health for HIV/AIDS Reduction (PSRHH) programme of the Society for Family Health and ActionAid Nigeria.

A project of JAAIDS, the Red Ribbon Awards is part of efforts aimed at encouraging quality coverage of HIV/AIDS in the media while strengthening media response to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and control in Nigeria. The first edition of the awards held in on World AIDS Day in December 2001.

In his address at this year’s event, JAAIDS Project Director, Mr. Omololu Falobi, challenged the media to rise up and be a force for change regarding the epidemic.

CJFE Seeks Applications for Journalists-at-Risk Fellowship

The Canadian Journalists for Free Expression (CJFE) is seeking applications for its second annual Donner/CJFE Journalist-at-Risk Fellowship to help a deserving journalist from abroad.

CJFE, along with the Donner Foundation and the University of Toronto’s Massey College, offers the Fellowship for the 2003-2004 academic year to give a foreign journalist a mid-career sabbatical in Canada.

The fellowship covers expenses for a journalist to spend an academic year (eight months) at Massey College in Toronto, auditing courses of his or her choice offered throughout the University of Toronto. It covers transportation to and from Canada; accommodation in the Toronto area; tuition fees at Massey College; and a modest allowance during the academic year.

The deadline for applications is April 25. The second Fellow will be chosen by a CJFE jury and announced on June 2. He or she will arrive in Canada next September to begin his or her studies.

In order to be considered for a Fellowship, candidates must be fluent in English so as to benefit from study at Massey College; undertake to return to the country from which they came and to the practice of journalism after the Fellowship; obtain written permission for leave from their employer (if applicable) and a written commitment that they will be re-hired on their return (if applicable); and have at least five years of experience as a working journalist in print, broadcasting or Internet.

Candidates are required to write a 1,000-word essay explaining why they qualify as a Journalist at Risk and what benefits they hope to derive from the Fellowship, and supply a detailed résumé along with written references from three people, preferably journalists.
Leadership course for African broadcast managers

African broadcast managers and senior editorial leaders are invited to a five-day certificate course focusing on integrated management strategies for radio and television professionals. The deadline for applications is May 23.

The course, co-presented by Rhodes University’s Sol Plaatje Media Leadership Institute in South Africa and the Thompson Foundation in the United Kingdom, will attempt to teach essential new strategies for managing the four critical elements of successful broadcasting: namely programming, marketing, financial and human resource management.

The course, entitled “Essentials of Broadcast Leadership”, which will run at Rhodes University in Grahamstown between June 2 and 6, is specifically designed for senior broadcast professionals working in the commercial, public or community sector, and currently involved in station management, programming, finance, human resources and news.

Lecture and debate sessions will be led by Thomson Foundation’s director, Mr. Gareth Price, and Sol Plaatje Institute director, Professor Govin Reddy.

On offer will be separate media-specific sessions for radio and television managers on topics ranging from general management to programme management, marketing, financial management, human resources management and resource management.

At the end of the course, participants will receive a Rhodes University Certificate in the Essentials of Broadcast Leadership.

Further information about the workshop may be obtained from the workshop coordinator, Gina Balarin, on telephone +27 46 603-8782 or by email on: g.balarin@ru.ac.za.

African journalists eligible for British international journalism fellowship

Mid-career African journalists working for Commonwealth Press Union (CPU) affiliated organisations are eligible for an all expenses paid masters’ degree in international journalism at City University, London. The deadline for applications is May 12, 2003.

The 12 month fellowship is designed for mid-career journalists aged between 24 and 28 years who would like to expand their skills through full-time postgraduate studies.

CPU-affiliated journalists who have an undergraduate university degree and have worked on a newspaper for approximately two years, or unqualified journalists who have worked on a newspaper since leaving school for at least seven years, are eligible for the fellowship.

The fellowship is co-sponsored by News International Plc, the British Foreign Office’s Chevening Scheme and Goodenough College. It will begin on September 22, 2003 and end exactly 12 months later.

The successful fellow will be accommodated in one of two very large houses owned by Goodenough College in central London. News International Plc will fund the cost of the fees and a living allowance, while the Chevening Scheme will underwrite the cost of accommodation provided by Goodenough College.

Further information on the fellowship may be obtained from CPU’s training coordinator, Jane Rangeley, on telephone +44 20 7583-7733 or by e-mail on: jane@cpu.org.uk

Canon Sponsorship For woman Photojournalists

African photojournalists seeking sponsorship for a particularly difficult or important assignment are eligible for this years’ Association of Women Journalist’s (AWJ) Canon Award. The deadline for applications is April 30, 2003.

The annual award grants 8,000 euros to a single female photojournalist who can prove exceptional photographic skills, and who can motivate an assignment of global significance in a social, economic, political or cultural subject.
The entire cash award must be used to cover the proposed assignment. The cash award is sponsored by Canon Communication Association, AWJ, and Images-Evidence.

The award is only given to individual photojournalists and not to groups. The resulting work will be exhibited in Perpignan, in France, in 2004. Last year’s recipient will exhibit her work at the International Festival of Photojournalism in Perpignan this year, on September 5.

Entry is free, but all applicants must agree to cede their rights to three of the best photographs from the assignment for exhibition and marketing purposes for the awards.

Only women are eligible, and all applicants must be professional photojournalists and have successfully completed at least one major photographic assignment in their careers. Applicants must also be able to write and speak in French or English.

The exact rules and application procedures can downloaded from AFJ’s website at: www.femmes-journalistes.asso.fr

**CJFE Seeks Nominations for 2003 International Press Freedom Award**

The Canadian Journalists for Free Expression (CJFE) is seeking nominations for the 2003 International Press Freedom Awards honouring journalists or media outlets who overcome enormous odds to report the news.

In recognition of their courage and determination, CJFE presents two awards every year at its November banquet. Last year, CJFE honoured Kazakhstani journalist, Lira Bayseitova, and independent Somali broadcaster, HornAfrik.

The winner of the award will be a journalist who has taken personal risks or suffered physical reprisals because of their work, and has reported on human rights or other issues in regions or countries not often covered by other media.

He or she must also demonstrates a commitment to human rights by reporting without bias, sexism, racism, etc., and has not won a major press freedom award from another organization. This award is also open to individual media outlets.

When making a nomination, please send a cover letter, biographical information on the nominee, along with samples of the nominee’s work and contact details.

Each award consists of a framed plaque and cash prize of CDN$3,000 (US$2,000). They will be presented to the winner at a ceremony in Toronto in November 2003.

Submissions must reach CJFE by July 31, 2003.

For further information or to submit a nomination, contact Joel Ruimy at CJFE; 489 College Street, Suite 403; Toronto, Ontario; M6G 1A5; Canada; Tel: +1 416 515 9622; Fax: +1 416 515 7879; E-mail: cjfe@cjfe.org; Website: www.cjfe.org

**Nigerian Activist Wins “Water Voice Messenger Prize”**

The Third World Water Forum held in Tokyo, Japan last month honoured a Nigerian water activist, Mrs. Bukola Babalobi with the “Best Water Voice Messenger Prize”.

The ‘Water Voice’ project was instituted in 2001, by the Secretariat of the Third World Water Forum whereby volunteers from all over the world working as “Water Voice Messengers” collected “Water Voices” reflecting the views of people on water related issues as an important input to the Water Forum. The objective was to make the biggest international Conference on Water held from March 16 to 24 in Japan an open platform accessible to all people concerned with water rather than meetings reserved for decision makers, scholars, and professionals.

“Water Voice Messengers” over the past 20 months collected voices from ordinary people, especially those living in remote areas without adequate means of communication, and sent these “Voices’ to the Third World Water Forum secretariat in Japan. A total of 2,045 “Water Voice Messengers” participated in the “Water Voices” project and nearly 27,000 “Water Voices” were collected from 142 countries through the efforts of these “Water Voice Messengers”.

Mrs. Babalobi, who is the Executive Director of WaterWatch Nigeria, along with 19 others from various parts of the world were honoured the “Best Water Voice messenger prize” for collecting and reporting voices adjudged to be the best in quality and quantity. For emerging as one of the Best 20 Water Voice messengers, Mrs. Babalobi was invited to participate in the Third World Water Forum all
expenses paid trip, and honoured with the “Best Water Voice Messenger prize” at a ceremony held in Tokyo, March 21.

WaterWatch Nigeria is a project of The Bread of Life Development Foundation, a Nigerian non-governmental organization.

Call For Nominations for 2003 John Humphrey Freedom Award

Rights & Democracy (International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development) is calling for nominations for its annual John Humphrey Freedom Award. The deadline for submissions is May 15, 2003.

Rights & Democracy presents the John Humphrey Freedom Award each year to an organization or individual from any country or region of the world, including Canada, for exceptional achievement in the promotion of human rights and democratic development. The Award consists of a grant of $25,000 as well as a speaking tour of Canadian cities to help increase awareness of the recipient’s human rights work. It is named in honour of the Canadian John Peters Humphrey, the human rights law professor who prepared the first draft of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

A nomination may be submitted by mail, fax or e-mail before May 15, 2003 with the following documents: a letter describing the nominee, their work and why they merit this Award; a curriculum vitae or organizational profile; supporting documentation such as articles written by or about the nominee; and references (with addresses and phone numbers), who may be contacted by members of the jury for more detailed information.

Eligible candidates must be committed to peace and non-violence; and must be independent of any political party or governmental affiliation. Preference is given to those working for the benefit of developing countries on the frontline, under conditions hostile to the recognition and application of basic human and democratic rights.

Preference will also be given to those involved in the priority issues of Rights & Democracy, namely: democratic development; women’s rights; rights of indigenous peoples; globalization and human rights. In the case of an individual, the Award is not given posthumously nor is it given to an organization that is no longer active.

Former staff or board members of Rights & Democracy are not eligible. Self-nominations are not be accepted.

The winner will be selected by an international jury composed of five members of Rights & Democracy’s Board of Directors, including Rebecca Cook, a professor of Law at the University of Toronto, known for her work on reproductive and women’s rights; Sofia Macher, Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Peru; Kathleen Mahoney, a Professor of Law at the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada and Chairperson of Rights & Democracy’s Board of Directors; Vitt Muntarbhorn, a professor of Law at the Chulalongkorn University in Thailand and consultant with the United Nations on children’s rights issues; Willy Munyoki Mutunga, a lawyer, who is Executive Director of the Kenya Human Rights Commission and Co-Chair of the Citizens Coalition for Constitutional Change.

Previous winners of the award have included Nigeria’s Campaign for Democracy (CD) in 1994 and Dr. Ayesha Imam of BAOBAB for Women’s Human Rights, for last year.

Nominations may be submitted to the John Humphrey Freedom Award, Rights & Democracy, 1001, de Maisonneuve Blvd. East, Suite 1100, Montréal (Québec) Canada H2L 4P9. Tel.: (514) 283-6073, Fax: (514) 283-3792. E-mail: ichrdd@ichrdd.ca. Web site: www.ichrdd.ca
"It is the mass media that make the exercise of freedom of expression a reality. This means that the conditions of its use must conform to the requirements of this freedom, with the result that there must be, inter alia, a plurality of means of communication, the barring of all monopolies thereof, in whatever form, and guarantees for the protection of the freedom and independence of journalists."

- The Inter-American Court of Human Rights
  November 13, 1985