NBC Warns Governments, Broadcasters Against Unfair Use of Airwaves in Campaigns

With less than three months to the 2003 general elections, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has issued a stern warning to radio and television stations to respect its guidelines for coverage of electioneering campaigns or face severe sanctions, including the revocation of their licences.

Although the Commission also warned that it would no longer tolerate any abuse of broadcasting laws by government functionaries, it did not state what measures it would take against them.

Issuing what it described as its final warning on broadcast stations in the country, the Commission said it had observed with growing concern, the excessive and lopsided use of radio and television stations for political broadcast by governments, ruling parties and political factions to the exclusion of other stakeholders, particularly political opponents and competing views.

Saying that this was contrary to the principles of broadcasting, the NBC noted that there was a gross absence of professionalism and disrespect for ethical considerations by broadcasting stations, leading to mischief and misinformation. These, it said, are key ingredients for the breakdown of law and order.

In the course of the general elections which took place during the transition period between December 1998 and February 1999, Media Rights Agenda monitored the media’s...
coverage of the elections and the political campaigns that preceded them. This involved the monitoring of selected newspapers and electronic media, including state-owned as well as privately owned radio and television stations.

The analysis of the coverage showed that the commercialization policy of the broadcast media denied some parties and most candidates access to the electorate while other candidates monopolized air time because of their superior money power.

There was clear imbalance in the focus on the political parties by the media generally with the Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP) being the highest beneficiary, to the detriment of the Alliance for Democracy and the All Peoples Party (APP).

This was largely due to the fact that the PDP had more financial resources than any of the other political parties as the monitoring exercise showed clearly that the PDP as a party and its individual candidates spent the most amount of money on campaigns both directly, in advertisements, and unofficially.

But besides the lopsided focus on the PDP to the detriment of the other parties, some of the reports fell far below what may qualify as fair and objective reporting. Many newspapers and some broadcast stations openly took sides with some politicians and parties for various reasons some of which bordered on economic and political interests.

The print media almost totally neglected to report on political events and activities in rural areas. In fact, the percentage of reports on Urban to Rural political activities ranged from between 100 per cent to 0 per cent in some months and 99.5 per cent to .5 per cent at the best of times.

With the elections approaching, many broadcast stations have issued rates for news coverage, carrying press releases with or without visuals, covering press conferences, covering political rallies, and other such events.

This is clearly contrary to Paragraph 7(ii) of the Code of Ethics for Nigerian Journalists which provides that “To demand payment for the publication of news is inimical to the notion of news as a fair, accurate, unbiased and factual report of an event.”

It is also a breach of Section 5.4.12 of the National Broadcasting Code which prohibits “any form of commercialization of political news or coverage.”

The NBC is now warning broadcasters and broadcasting stations that it is determined to ensure equity, objectivity and fairness in political broadcasting, particularly as the country inches towards electioneering campaign period and the elections proper.

It drew the attention of broadcasting stations and stakeholders in the industry to the provisions of Section 5.4.0 of the National Broadcasting Code, which regulates the coverage of electioneering campaigns. In particular, the NBC asked broadcasting stations to abide by the following sections:

SECTION 5.4.6 which states that “In adherence to the principle of pluralism of ideas and opinions, equal opportunity and air time shall be provided to all political parties or views, with particular regard to amount of time and belt during electioneering campaign period.”

SECTION 5.4.7, which requires that “a log shall be kept by each station’s news division … showing the allocation of time to each party with dates, titles of programmes and other information as may be requested by the Commission to ensure fairness.”

SECTION 5.4.12, which provides that “in the interest of fairness and balance and to prevent the monetization of political broadcasts, any form of commercialization of political news or coverage is prohibited.”

SECTION 5.4.15, which stipulates that “it shall be the duty of broadcast stations to highlight the activities of government. But it shall not be reduced to glamorizing government functionaries or resort to praise singing or denial of access to those with contrary views or political leaning.”

SECTION 5.4.19, which directs that “a station shall set up a committee to examine all complaints and appeals from political parties and the general public on political broadcasting during electioneering campaigns, and make appropriate decisions, including the granting of a
right of reply.” It further provides that the committee’s proceedings shall be forwarded to the Director-General of the NBC within 24 hours.

On political advertising, the NBC referred broadcast stations to section 8.7.0 of the National Broadcasting Code.

It said under Section 8.7.2 of the Code, a station was free to sell airtime for the purpose of political campaigns provided that all messages are in the form of spot announcements or jingles not exceeding 60 seconds; no station can be involved in the production of such announcements or jingles; no voices of members of staff of any station are used in political jingles; and all jingles conform to the standards of truth, decency, good taste and morality.

It insisted that equal opportunity must be given to every political party to pay for its advertisement.

The Commission stressed that since the airwaves which radio and televisions utilize belong to the Nigerian public and are only held by the government or private broadcast stations in trust, the people then have a right to plural views, which must not be compromised under any guise by any government in power, whether at local, State or Federal levels.

It told the media, particularly the broadcast section, that like all other pillars of power such as the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary, they must operate with fairness, justice and legality.

The NBC warned: “further abuse of the broadcasting laws of the land by stations and stakeholders, including government functionaries, will attract appropriate sanctions, including the revocation of the licence of defaulting stations.”

Guidelines For Broadcast Coverage Of Election Campaigns In Transitional Democracies

The following authoritative set of guidelines is issued by ARTICLE 19, the Global Campaign for Free Expression, to address the obligations of governments and government media to ensure fair and equitable broadcasting in election campaigns:

The following Guidelines concern broadcast coverage of election campaigns in transitional democracies. These are countries which have recently emerged from a period of non-democratic governance, characterized by, among other features, the absence of free and fair elections. The Guidelines are intended to be directly applicable only to the period of the election campaign itself and only to the government broadcast media; they may, however, also be relevant to government-controlled press during election periods, and to government media coverage of political matters during non-campaign periods.

The term “government media” is used in these Guidelines to refer to broadcasting channels that are owned, operated or controlled by the government, as well as to channels that are managed by government appointees or that are governed by boards, a majority of whose members are selected by the government or ruling party. The Guidelines also apply to public service broadcasting channels, namely, media which are supported entirely or in part by government funds but are governed by boards that are independent of government and all political interests.

Private media do not carry the same responsibilities under international law as do government media. Nevertheless, ARTICLE 19 encourages private broadcasters as a matter of professional responsibility to comply with the Guidelines which apply to government media. Such voluntary implementation of the Guidelines, including for example, the requirements of balanced and impartial news coverage and the granting of direct-access air time on a non-discriminatory basis would enhance the fairness of an election. ARTICLE 19 also encourages professional associations of journalists and broadcasters to adopt relevant Guidelines and to encourage their members to adhere to them.
GUIDELINE 1
During the period preceding an election, government media have a duty to inform the public about the political parties, candidates, campaign issues, voting processes, and other matters relevant to the election.

GUIDELINE 2
Government media have a duty to be balanced and impartial in their election reporting and not to discriminate against any political party or candidate in granting access to air time.

This duty requires that news, interview and information programmes must not be biased in favour of, or against, any party or candidate.

GUIDELINE 3
Any laws that restrict freedom of expression in breach of international law and standards must be abolished.

GUIDELINE 4
The Government must make special efforts to investigate all acts, or threatened acts, of violence, intimidation or harassment directed against media personnel, or any act of destruction of the property or premises of a media outlet, particularly where there is any reason to believe that the act was motivated by an intent to interfere with media freedom, and to bring those responsible to justice.

GUIDELINE 5
There must be no government censorship of any election programme.

The government should issue a clear statement to the public and all broadcast stations that the media are encouraged to broadcast election-related programmes, and that the media will not be penalized in any way for broadcasting programmes merely because they are critical of the government, its policies or the ruling party.

The government or government media must not interfere with the broadcast of an election programme, unless it is absolutely certain that a restraint is necessary to prevent a substantial harm to a legitimate interest, such as an act of violence.

Any decision to restrain a programme must be promptly reviewed by an independent body in order to determine whether the restraint was necessary or whether it constituted an act of censorship.

The standards used by the government, or by government media, in determining whether or not to broadcast an election programme must not be vague or broadly defined.

Any post-broadcast penalty must be proportionate to the harm inflicted. In particular, unless a broadcast actually and intentionally incites violence or hatred, a penalty must not include imprisonment or such an onerous fine as to force the political party out of operation; nor may it restrain all future broadcasts by the party or candidate.

GUIDELINE 6
It is strongly recommended that the media be exempted from legal liability for unlawful statements made by candidates or party representatives and broadcast during the course of election campaigns, other than those which constitute clear and direct incitement to violence. The parties and speakers should be held solely responsible for any unlawful statements they make.

GUIDELINE 7
Any candidate or party that makes a reasonable claim of having been defamed or otherwise injured by a broadcast should either be granted the opportunity to reply or be entitled to a correction or retraction by the broadcaster or by the person who made the allegedly defamatory statement. The reply or correction should be broadcast as soon as possible.

The reply, correction or retraction should be approximately the same length, and should be broadcast in approximately the same time period, as the allegedly defamatory statement. This duty may be discharged by the allocation of direct access time pursuant to the normal allocation process.
It is recommended that an impartial body be entrusted with deciding complaints that a programme violated the general laws, including laws against defamation and incitement to hatred or violence. This body should be empowered to order a right of reply, correction or retraction, and its decisions should be subject to review by the courts.

**GUIDELINE 8**

Government media must be particularly scrupulous in complying with their obligation to provide accurate, balanced and impartial information in their reporting of news and current affairs.

The duty of balance requires that parties or candidates receive news coverage commensurate with their importance in the election and the extent of their electoral support.

Owing to the potential for editorial opinions to be confused with news, government media are urged not to broadcast editorial opinions at all. If a government channel broadcasts an editorial opinion, it is obliged also to broadcast the opinions of the major opposition parties. If a broadcaster presents his or her own views, these must be clearly identified as such, and it is recommended that they should not be aired during news programmes.

News coverage of press conferences and public statements concerning matters of political controversy (as opposed to functions of state) called or made by the head of government, government ministers, or members of parliament should be subject to a right of reply or equal time rules. This obligation acquires even greater force when the person making the statement is also standing for office.

**GUIDELINE 9**

Government media must grant political parties or candidates air time for direct access programmes on a fair and non-discriminatory basis. For the first multi-party election, it is strongly recommended that all major parties or candidates receive equal time.

All parties or candidates that are formally registered must be granted access to some amount of air time for a country’s first multi-party election.

Following the first election in a transitional democracy, and if there are objective criteria for establishing the levels of support for the different parties, air time may be allocated on a proportional basis. All parties should receive some air time, unless the parties are so numerous that allocation of time to all parties would seriously dilute the broadcasts’ effectiveness in informing the electorate about the parties that are likely to form the government.

It is recommended that the allocation of air time be carried out by an independent body in consultation with, and with the agreement of, all the parties.

Where air time is allocated on the basis of rough proportionality, some amount of time must be allocated to small parties, parties with strong support in only a few regions, parties without parliamentary seats, new parties and independent candidates.

If time is allocated on a proportional basis and the government media broadcast regional programmes, parties that have strong support in only a few regions should be given air time on regional programmes proportional to their strength in those regions.

The amount of time allocated to the parties or candidates must be sufficient for them to communicate their messages, and for the voters to inform themselves about the issues, party positions, and qualifications and character of the candidates.

Direct access programmes should be aired throughout the campaign period and at times when the broadcasts are likely to reach the largest audiences. The government media violate their duty of balance if they air the programmes of some parties or candidates at hours (such as past midnight or during the working day) when it is inconvenient for large segments of the population to view or hear them.

Time slots for direct access programmes must be assigned to each of the registered political parties or candidates pursuant to an equitable process.

Whatever air time is available to a political party or candidate, it must be made available on financial terms equal to those granted to other parties or candidates.
At least for the first several elections of a transitional democracy, the government media must provide an amount of time adequate for effective political communication to registered parties or candidates free of charge or else for a nominal sum.

If parties or candidates are to be allowed to purchase additional air time, they must be allowed to do so on equal terms. Rates for such time and the amount of time that may be sold to any one purchaser may be regulated in order to limit the advantage that richer parties clearly have in this area. Stricter regulation may be warranted during the first several elections of a transitional democracy, especially where opposition parties had previously been proscribed and thus did not have the opportunity to raise party funds.

GUIDELINE 10
The media should broadcast programmes that provide an effective opportunity for journalists, current affairs experts and/or the general public to put questions to party leaders and other candidates, and for candidates to debate with each other.

While broadcasters have greater editorial discretion in deciding which parties, candidates and commentators should appear on such programmes than on news broadcasts, their discretion is subject to the general obligations of fairness and impartiality. At the least, representatives of all major parties should be invited to participate in such programmes.

Journalists, experts and other questioners should be selected so as to ensure balance among the questions.

Special information programmes should be aired during prime viewing or listening hours.

GUIDELINE 11
Government media are obliged to broadcast voter education programmes unless the government has undertaken other information initiatives which are likely to reach as many voters as would the broadcast programmes.

The programmes must be accurate and impartial and must effectively inform voters about the voting process, including how, when and where to vote, to register to vote and to verify proper registration; the secrecy of the ballot (and thus safety from retaliation); the importance of voting; the functions of the offices that are under contention; and similar matters.

The government media are obliged to broadcast programmes that will reach the greatest number of voters feasible. Broadcasts should include programmes in minority languages and programmes targeted for groups that traditionally may have been excluded from the political process, such as ethnic or religious minorities, women and indigenous groups.

GUIDELINE 12
If a broadcaster publishes the result of an opinion poll or election projection, it should strive to report the results fairly and, in particular, to publish all readily available information that would assist the listeners in understanding the poll’s significance.

A broadcaster which publishes the results of an opinion poll should identify the organization that conducted the poll, the organization or party that commissioned and paid for the poll, the methodology employed, the sample size, the margin of error, and the fieldwork dates. In addition, the broadcaster should state that the poll reflects public opinion only at the time that the poll was taken.

GUIDELINE 13
Election broadcasts must be monitored and regulated by an independent, impartial body.

This body should be responsible for allocating time to political parties or candidates. It should also hear and take action promptly on complaints concerning broadcast-related violations by the media, and by political parties and candidates. The body should receive complaints from parties, candidates and citizens. It should be empowered to order prompt rectification, retraction or a right of reply and to seek enforcement of its orders, including through the courts.

The body must make all of its decisions promptly. In particular, any claimed violation that has the result of preventing or delaying the airing of a direct access programme must be reviewed with due speed.
If there is a regularly constituted broadcast-monitoring body that is independent of government, it may carry out these functions; otherwise, a body should be established especially to handle election-related matters.

This body may include representatives or appointees of government and political parties, but it should not be able to take decisions only upon the strength of the votes of the appointees of the government or of one party. If any parties are represented, it is recommended that the body include representatives of at least all major parties. It is recommended that the body include independent media professionals.

It is recommended that the election broadcast regulatory body monitor all campaign-related broadcasts to assess their compliance with laws and regulations.

Government media should facilitate media monitoring by non-governmental, non-partisan organisations, including by making tapes of election broadcasts available free of charge or at minimal cost.

The election broadcast regulatory body should be empowered to recommend, subject to judicial review, that an election be postponed, suspended or annulled if it can be established that there have been breaches of international or national law which might significantly affect or have affected the outcome of the election.

GUIDELINE 14
Actions and decisions of a body charged with regulating election broadcasts must be subject to judicial review, which must be carried out on an expedited basis.

Any decision that has the effect of prohibiting the transmission of a direct access programme must be reviewed in a particularly speedy fashion.

GUIDELINE 15
In plebiscites and referendums, where the voters have the choice only of voting “yes” or “no” to a particular proposition, equal air time must be allocated to each side. This formula stands even if more parties support one side of the issue than the other. Guidelines 1-14, to the extent relevant, are also applicable.

GUIDELINE 16
The preceding Guidelines should be appropriately modified and applied by local and regional government media in local, municipal and regional elections.

Journalists, Press Freedom Groups Launch Global Campaign for Safety

A coalition of media companies, journalists, press freedom groups and international organisations under the auspices of the International News Safety Institute (INSI), have announced plans to launch a new global network to counter attacks on media and violence against journalists.

The prospect of a new war in Iraq and the regional struggles in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world have sparked a surge of interest in new actions to protect journalists and media staff.

The INSI, based at the International Press Centre in Brussels, Belgium, is the initiative of the world’s largest journalists’ group, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), and the International Press Institute (IPI), which represents editors and media executives.

IFJ General Secretary, Mr. Aidan White, promised: “The Institute will bring safety into the media mainstream,” adding that it was “time for media to work together to reduce the risks and to confront those who threaten journalism around the world.”

Richard Tait, Vice President of the IPI and former Editor in Chief of the Independent Television Network (ITN), said, “We need to dispel the attitude that safety is optional. It must be taken seriously by everyone, including managers,” emphasizing that: “We need to change the culture of indifference.” He disclosed that the Institute will forge a unified approach by broadcast and print media.
The objectives for which INSI was set up are to:

- Provide support and develop safety assistance programmes for journalists and media staff, including freelance workers, particularly those operating from and working in regions where conflict conditions exist or where they are regularly engaged in potentially dangerous assignments.
- Encourage agreements on health and safety matters, including risk-awareness training and first aid courses between media organisations and their staff, as well as agreements with unions and associations.
- Disseminate information through training manuals, updated advisories and handbooks for journalists and media staff working in dangerous areas using Internet and traditional resources.
- Promote industry best practice using examples of training and assistance being developed within the media and journalism.
- Investigate, develop and promote safety services, including affordable insurance arrangements, for all journalists and media staff.
- Promote existing industry initiatives, including codes and guidelines.
- Establish a global network of organisations, working in all regions of the world, committed to working towards risk-reduction in the work of media.
- Sponsor awareness-raising initiatives on this question at major media and journalistic events, including conferences of media professionals at national, regional and international level.

The INSI will be managed by a core group of industry-based sponsors, including regional media networks, and will seek support funding through subscription with additional support from existing donor groups in the public and private sector.

The IFJ and IPI plan to establish an advisory council consisting of representatives of professional groups and industry leaders in the field of safety for the INSI. Additional support will also come from press freedom groups, media educators and organisations committed to the development of media in open, democratic and peaceful societies.

The IFJ and IPI, conscious of the threats of possible new media casualties in the worsening political climate in the Middle East and elsewhere, organised an inaugural discussion among media industry leaders in Brussels at the end of November last year.

The meeting included representatives of over 50 international networks, including the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Cable News Network (CNN), ITN, Reuters, a number of national media, and the world’s largest network of regional broadcasters, the European Broadcasting Union.

They joined journalists’ unions from the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Southern Africa, and press freedom groups including, Reporters sans frontières (RSF), in backing moves to set up the new Institute as soon as possible.

Representatives from international organizations, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) also pledged their support.

White said “More than 80 organisations working for news safety have already signed up,” adding that “This is a unique network of solidarity that will provide practical assistance to journalists and media staff most in need anywhere in the world.”

The Institute, which plans to establish regional groups, has already adopted a draft plan of action, which includes:

Setting Standards: The Institute will set international standards for safety training and equipment. The meeting insisted that “the standards should be global, not one code for the north and one for the south.” Training programmes organised by military and private organisations will be verified. A common international safety code is planned.
Safety Training for All: The Institute will expand access to risk-awareness training for journalists and media staff and plans to raise funds for projects that will provide training, organised according to local needs, for those who currently cannot afford courses, including freelancers.

Information Hub: The Institute will have a regional focus and will bring together knowledge and experience from working journalists, regional experts, press freedom groups, and professional trainers. It will also provide access to equipment, safety manuals and materials for media and journalists.

Lobbying for Safety: The Institute will be a key lobbying organisation putting pressure on the industry and governments for more effective action to protect journalists. This will include not just those on the frontline, but also for those who are victims of violence at home, whether covering potentially violent events or are carrying out investigative journalism.

The Institute will focus on all aspects of safety and welfare of journalists and media staff, including promotion of cut-price insurance schemes for freelance and media staff and promoting trauma and stress counseling initiatives to help media staff cope with the pressures of reporting in difficult conditions.

The Institute comes with the backing of pioneers of news safety work including John Owen, former head of the Freedom Forum European Centre and currently teaching journalism at City University, London, who outlined the main challenges facing the meeting thus: to confront the lack of participation from smaller media and the printed press, to develop a service for local journalists, and to internationalise the news safety campaign.

Owen said: “The time is right to bring news safety into the forefront of media work globally. We must do more to reduce the risks and confront the killers who make journalism such a dangerous business these days.”

Another pioneer of news safety work, Chris Cramer, President CNN International Networks, who recently renewed his calls for the media industry to take safety more seriously, is giving the Institute his full backing and has agreed to be the Institute’s first Honorary President.

*Media Rights Monitor* is published monthly by the Media Rights Agenda (MRA), an independent, non-governmental organisation established for the purpose of promoting and protecting media freedom and freedom of expression in Nigeria. MRA is registered under Nigerian law and has Observer Status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights.

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Editorial:

2003 Elections: Let's Be Professional

Nigeria is once again on the threshold of another transition from one civilian government to another. The importance of getting it right this time is certainly not lost on Nigerians. In the past, we have stumbled and wobbled at this juncture and our experiments at democratic governance have halted abruptly at this stage. We have therefore been left with the belief that Nigeria is jinxed when it comes to the successful transition from one civilian government to another. We refuse to submit to this fatalism.

There is no doubt that the media has a great role to play in Nigeria’s success at this stage in the sustenance of democracy.

The power of the media to influence the political direction was apparent in 1983 when the Federal Government, through the publicly funded Radio Nigeria and the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and the various radio and television stations in the states controlled by the government at the center were used for propaganda. These stations reported events, especially election results, divergently and contradictorily. The result was the carnage that attended the 1983 elections, especially in the Western states. Hundreds of human lives and property worth millions of Naira were lost to the bloodbath.

The print media were not left out. State governments, political parties and party patrons set up newspapers and magazines to either counter the government and party in power or project their own views. They were neither set up to expand the democratic frontiers nor that of freedom of expression.

Similar experiences have occurred since then.

As we move towards elections in April this year signs of unethical and unprofessional journalism that characterized reporting in 1983, and led to the crisis that brought down that government are already manifesting. Although they appear to be insignificant at the moment,
they could mutate if uncontrolled and may explode into a huge crisis that may scuttle the present civil rule.

The power of the media to sway opinion can never be over emphasized and as governor Joshua Dariye of Plateau state noted in November 2002, the press is like the Bible and Koran whose reports many take as the absolute truth and on which they base their judgments. There is therefore the need for the media—radio, television, print and lately, the Internet to report fairly and responsibly not only to ensure that the present transition is conducted peacefully but also sustained.

**PEN Launches Anti-Impunity Campaign**

PEN Canada marked International Human Rights Day last month by launching of a year-long campaign against impunity for free-expression violations against writers and journalists.

The 2002-2003 campaign will monitor impunity cases world-wide but focus on the situation in the Americas, where the murders of journalists “continues to be the most serious threat to freedom of expression,” PEN Canada says.

PEN Canada recently received financial support from the Human Security Program of Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs to co-ordinate the campaign.

Working with the Writers in Prison Committee of International PEN (WiPC), PEN American Center and PEN Mexico, the group said the campaign will culminate in the presentation of a report at the 69th International PEN Congress in Mexico City in November 2003. A day-long seminar on impunity will be held and international free-expression groups and experts will be invited to launch an action plan for tackling impunity in the Americas and elsewhere in the world.

Throughout this year, special appeals will also be launched to push for the resolution of cases involving unsolved crimes against journalists. Information exchanges will be set up with the Organisation of American States (OAS) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression, the Media Freedom Representative of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression.

**International Free Expression Mandates Call for Abolition of Criminal Defamation**

The three international mandates for promoting freedom of expression have called for the abolition of all criminal defamation laws saying they are not a justifiable restriction on free speech.

In a joint declaration in London, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, Mr. Ambeyi Ligabo; the Representative on Freedom of the Media for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Mr. Freimut Duve; and the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression for the Organisation of American States (OAS), Mr. Eduardo Bertoni, expressed concern at the ongoing abuse of criminal defamation laws, including by politicians and other public figures.

The declaration was issued at the end of a meeting they held in London on December 9 and 10 under the auspices of ARTICLE 19, the Global Campaign for Free Expression, with representatives of non-governmental organisations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), journalists’ associations and human rights experts.

They said all criminal defamation laws should be abolished and replaced, where necessary, with appropriate civil defamation laws.
The three mandates renewed their concern, first expressed in their Joint Declaration of November 20, 2001, over interference in the free flow of information and ideas by elected political office holders and members of government who are media owners.

They also condemned attacks on journalists, including assassinations and threats, and the climate of impunity that still exists in many countries.

The Special Rapporteurs kicked against the imposition of restrictions on reporting on ongoing legal proceedings as well as special restrictions on commenting on courts and judges.

Saying that these could not be justified, they noted that the judiciary plays a key public role and, as such, must be subject to open public scrutiny.

They explained that restrictions on reporting on ongoing legal proceedings may only be justified if there is a substantial risk of serious prejudice to the fairness of those proceedings and the threat to the right to a fair trial or to the presumption of innocence for an accused person outweighs the harm to freedom of expression.

In their view, any sanctions for reporting on legal proceedings should be applied only after a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal.

They stressed that the practice of summary justice being applied in cases involving criticism of judicial proceedings was unacceptable.

According to them, “Courts and judicial processes, like other public functions, are subject to the principle of maximum disclosure of information which may be overcome only where necessary to protect the right to a fair trial or the presumption of innocence.”

The special rapporteurs endorsed the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, adopted by the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights at its 32nd Ordinary Session held in Banjul, The Gambia, last October, and the commitment of the African Commission to adopt a regional mechanism to promote the right to freedom of expression.

Below is the full text of the declaration:

**JOINT DECLARATION**

By the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and the OAS Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression:

*Having met* with representatives of NGOs, UNESCO, journalists’ associations and human rights experts in London on 9-10 December 2002, under the auspices of ARTICLE 19, the Global Campaign for Free Expression;

*Reiterating*, on the occasion of Human Rights Day, that an environment of respect for all human rights is necessary for realisation in practice of the right to freedom of expression;

*Recalling and reaffirming* the Joint Declarations of 26 November 1999, 30 November 2000 and 20 November 2001;

*Condemning* attacks on journalists, including assassinations and threats, as well as the climate of impunity that still exists in many countries, as noted in the Joint Declaration of 30 November 2000;

*Recognising* the importance and mutually reinforcing role in a democracy of the twin pillars of a free media and an independent, effective judiciary;

*Welcoming* the establishment of the International Criminal Court;

*Stressing* that problems associated with a weak judiciary cannot be addressed through restrictions on freedom of expression;

*Cognisant* of the threat posed by increasing concentration of ownership of the media and the means of communication, in particular to diversity and editorial independence;

*Aware* of the important corrective function played by the media in exposing political and economic corruption and other wrongdoing;

*Recalling* the concern expressed in the Joint Declaration of 20 November 2001 over interference in the free flow of information and ideas by elected political officials and members of government who are media owners;
Mindful of the ongoing abuse of criminal defamation laws, including by politicians and other public figures;
Welcoming the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa and the commitment of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights to adopt a regional mechanism to promote the right to freedom of expression;
Noting the need for specialised mechanisms to promote freedom of expression in every region of the world;
Adopt the following Declaration:

**Freedom of Expression and the Administration of Justice**

- Special restrictions on commenting on courts and judges cannot be justified; the judiciary plays a key public role and, as such, must be subject to open public scrutiny.
- No restrictions on reporting on ongoing legal proceedings may be justified unless there is a substantial risk of serious prejudice to the fairness of those proceedings and the threat to the right to a fair trial or to the presumption of innocence outweighs the harm to freedom of expression.
- Any sanctions for reporting on legal proceedings should be applied only after a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal; the practice of summary justice being applied in cases involving criticism of judicial proceedings is unacceptable.
- Courts and judicial processes, like other public functions, are subject to the principle of maximum disclosure of information which may be overcome only where necessary to protect the right to a fair trial or the presumption of innocence.
- Judges’ right to freedom of expression, and to comment on matters of public concern, should be subject only to such narrow and limited restrictions as are necessary to protect their independence and impartiality.

**Commercialisation and Freedom of Expression**

- Governments and public bodies should never abuse their custody over public finances to try to influence the content of media reporting; the placement of public advertising should be based on market considerations.
- Media owners have a responsibility to respect the right to freedom of expression and, in particular, editorial independence.
- The right to freedom of expression and to a diversity of information and ideas should be respected in international financial arrangements, including the upcoming round of World Trade Organisation negotiations, and by international financial institutions.

**Criminal Defamation**

- Criminal defamation is not a justifiable restriction on freedom of expression; all criminal defamation laws should be abolished and replaced, where necessary, with appropriate civil defamation laws.

Ambeyi Ligabo, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression
Freimut Duve, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media
Eduardo Bertoni, OAS Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression

**Mbeki Speaks At African Editors’ Conference**

South African President Thabo Mbeki will deliver the keynote speech at a regional conference in South Africa in February that will discuss the role of media in the democratisation of Africa. Organised by the South African Editors Forum (SANEF) and funded by the Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD), the All Africa Editors’ Conference will take place from February 14 to 16 in Johannesburg. It will bring together leading journalists from the continent to discuss the role of independent media in Africa, the necessity of building institutional capacity for promoting press freedom in the region; and the media’s relationship to the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) initiative.
SANEF said it hoped the conference will affirm press freedom as a vital part of the African Union and NEPAD processes, and establish capacity-building initiatives to promote press freedom on a regional and continent-wide level.

**UNESCO Releases Virtual Lab Toolkit**


The Toolkit was developed for UNESCO by a team of specialists working with the Institute for Informatics of the Technical University of Freiberg in Germany, which served as technical coordinator; the COPINE Centre of the Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile Ife, Nigeria; and the Shanghai Research Centre for Applied Physics in China.

It provides an extensive set of free person-to-person (P2P) communication tools in the form of audio and video conference, scientific text chat, whiteboard, collaborative authorship, portal and mailing list management, among others. It also gives basic advice on person-to-equipment (P2E) tools.

The Purpose of the Virtual Laboratory Toolkit is to provide information and free software tools which are relevant for the creation of a Virtual Laboratory.

UNESCO says the Toolkit is available for testing and application by scientists and other researchers, particularly in Third World countries, who are interested in creating or participating in virtual laboratories.

To begin, it is being tested by an informatics support group within the UNESCO “cross-cutting” project Virtual Laboratories for Drying Lakes (Lake Chad, the Dead Sea, the Aral Sea). If all goes well, based on the experiences and suggestions of users, a second version could come out later this year.

UNESCO defines a virtual laboratory (VL) as “an electronic workspace for distance collaboration and experimentation in research or other creative activity, to generate and deliver results using distributed information and communication technologies.”

It distinguishes a virtual laboratory from a “Real Laboratory” (RL) or a “Traditional Laboratory”, but explains that a virtual laboratory is not viewed as a replacement for, or a competitor with, a real laboratory.

Instead, it said, virtual laboratories are possible extensions to real laboratories and open new opportunities not realizable entirely within a real laboratory at an affordable cost.

UNESCO notes that the burgeoning research engine of the northern hemisphere, which has attracted the world’s intellectual talent, has not provided equitable benefit to the vast majority of the world’s population in the less-developed nations, where many scientists lack proper facilities and equipment for conducting research as well as access to scientific research conducted in other countries.

The result, it said, is that researchers and scientists in developing countries are not able to collaborate on an equal footing with their peers around the world, retarding work on development-oriented problems and encouraging the “brain drain” phenomenon.

UNESCO insists that equitable access of developing country scientists to virtual laboratories holds promise for enabling them to fully participate in and benefit from international scientific research, provided that such VLs take account of the economic and infrastructure constraints of the “digital divide”.

**Commonwealth Launches Website To Bridge Digital Divide**

The Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General Florence Mugasha launched a new Commonwealth website on December 19 to assist developing member countries in bridging
the ‘digital divide’, the gap between those with and those without access to information and communication technologies (ICTs).


This website, with comments and suggestions from members of the co-ordinating group, will be moved to http://www.commonwealthdigitalopportunities.com at the end of this January.

Dr Ken Lum, Secretary to the Commonwealth Science Council and Director of the Commonwealth Secretariat’s Science and Technology Division, which is coordinating implementation of the Action Programme, said at the launch: “ICTs provide the developing nations access to digital opportunities that will help enable them to meet their millennium development goals. This programme will provide some necessary mechanisms to achieve those goals.”

He explained that “the website is intended to serve as a resource for those developing Commonwealth countries that are seeking to bridge the gap, to improve networking and build synergies. It includes information on the recommendations of the Expert Group, the partners in the Action Programme, and some of the developmental opportunities offered by ICTs, including telecentres, knowledge networks, e-governance and e-commerce. Future developments planned will include discussion groups, feedback forums, and national and regional linkages to show how ICTs can be used to promote sustainable development and contribute to achieving the millennium development goals.”

The report of the Expert Group, which was set up by the High Level Review Group that reported to the Coolum summit, recommended that the Commonwealth should help build ICT capacity in developing member countries through: telecentres as knowledge shops; ICT policy resource centres; skills for ICT development and use; e-Government for good governance; and knowledge networks for information sharing, innovation and professional development.

The website was launched at the second meeting of the co-ordinating group for the implementation of the Action Programme.

Partners in the coordinating group include the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth of Learning, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association, the Commonwealth Business Council, the Commonwealth Network of Information Technology for Development (COMNET-IT), the Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management and the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation.

Funding for the Action Programme is provided by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation.

**Conference on ‘Networking Africa’s Future’**

A conference aimed at examining actual achievements in Africa in using information and communication technologies (ICTs) for development will be held in South Africa from April 13 to 16.

Entitled “Networking Africa’s Future: lessons of Empowerment from Communities”, it will be held at the Kwa Maritane game lodge, and will feature a state-of-the-art Internet satellite system as the platform for a website covering the discussions.

The conference promises to close the loop between research and practice, revealing what has actually been achieved in Africa using information and communication technologies (ICTs) for development.

It will focus on key emerging themes such as alleviating poverty through ICTs, schoolnets, telecentres, policy issues and innovation.
Handbook for Legislators on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights

A new Handbook for Legislators on HIV/AIDS has been published by the United Nations Action Against AIDS (UNAIDS) in Geneva, Switzerland.


The Handbook gives practical examples of implementation of the International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights from around the world, in response to the tendency on the part of some governments to make simple or ad hoc legislative reform without community consultation or proper consideration of human rights issues.

Although the focus of the Handbook is on legal issues, other complementary methods of administrative implementation of human rights norms are encouraged, such as policy development and intergovernmental cooperation. This is informed by the belief that legal guarantees of rights may not be appropriate where rights cannot easily be tested in a court of law.

The publishers believe that legislation would not be an effective means of practical implementation of human rights in some circumstances and countries, because of the lack of social or economic structures and resources that are a precondition to their fulfillment. They argue that law is only one of a range of tools, including education, whereby social change conducive to containing the epidemic can be fostered.

The Handbook is intended to help legislators and other policy-makers develop laws that are consistent with public health and human rights principles, but it does not provide model laws owing to the wide variety of legal systems in different countries.

Diverse and innovative responses to the epidemic are encouraged where they comply with international human rights norms. The Handbook identifies best practice examples from the resource of varying economic, social, and cultural values, traditions and practices around the world. Mainly positive case-studies are described and analysed to show how compliance can be achieved. Occasionally, negative examples are used to show why and how some ineffective measures did not work, and what stimulated change or their abandonment.

ITU Seeks Involvement in Domain Name System

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) member representatives have voted for a resolution calling on the organisation to take an active role in all “discussions and initiatives” involving domain names and the domain-name system (DNS).

Many view the ITU vote as a move to step into the uncertainty surrounding domain names and the DNS, both of which are overseen by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), a group that has been criticized even by ICANN allies.

The rationale of those pushing for greater ITU involvement is that the ITU is affiliated to the United Nations, a global organization; is dominated by international telecommunications companies, and must seek member government approval for ITU policies.

But some domain name industry observers believe the massive ITU structure would further marginalize domain name industry and public advocate voices. The U.S. government as well as the technology community have opposed ITU’s involvement as being too cumbersome.

The domain name industry is estimated to be a $2.5 billion (about N320 billion) industry, and control of a domain name is vital to the many businesses that own them.

Because governments are involved in the ITU, analysts such as Syracuse University Professor Milton Mueller believe that governments could use ITU power over DNS issues as “a convenient point of leverage for enforcement regulation.”
The disarray at ICANN is leading some to conclude that private-sector management of the DNS cannot work, while Yale Law School instructor David Johnson notes that ITU’s foundation in governments would provide “enforceable global regulations.”

Some experts argue that ICANN should be structured to focus on technical issues, while the ITU could be responsible for public policy. However, others say such issues often overlap.

Commonwealth Re-launches Human Rights Newsletter

The Commonwealth Secretariat’s Human Rights Unit (HRU) is relaunching its newsletter, ‘Human Rights Update; to improve the flow of information between the unit and those interested in the promotion of human rights within the Commonwealth.

The first, new-look issue of the newsletter, which has not been published since the 1990s, is expected this January.

Designed to improve the flow of information between the HRU and those interested in the promotion of human rights within the Commonwealth and beyond, ‘Human Rights Update’ will be issued three times a year from the Secretariat’s London headquarters.

It will include information on HRU projects, conference and workshop reports, developments in international human rights forums, human rights news from member countries and book reviews.

It will be distributed to national human rights commissions, ministries of justice and other relevant organisations in member countries as well as to staff of the Secretariat.

Jarvis Matiya, the Chief Programme Officer at the HRU, said: “In order to make the newsletter a useful forum, we will continue to rely on contributions from national and international human rights institutions, human rights NGOs, human rights experts and readers of the newsletter,” adding: “We therefore welcome contributions in the form of short articles on human rights.”

The HRU was established in 1985 to promote the understanding of and respect for human rights in the Commonwealth in accordance with the principles enshrined in the various Commonwealth declarations and UN human rights instruments. It has recently undergone a reorganisation, and now has an autonomous status within the Secretariat, reporting directly to a Deputy Secretary-General.

The HRU has also received a new mandate, which includes: to provide advice to the Secretary-General; to mainstream human rights within the Secretariat in order to make sure that staff have a clear understanding of human rights issues; to make available to member countries human rights information; and to develop human rights programmes for the benefit of member countries.

Further information on contributing or subscribing to the newsletter, may be obtained from Mr. Matiya at j.matiya@commonwealth.int.

Human Rights Advocacy Distance Learning Course

The Human Rights Education Association will conduct a Human Rights Advocacy Distance Learning Course from February 17 to May 11, 2003.

The course will provide human rights activists with a range of human rights advocacy methods and concepts as a means for them to reflect on and deepen their own work. It will examine the theoretical foundations and critical issues of human rights advocacy, elements of advocacy planning, and strategies for action.

The course, which is intended for staff members of human rights and social justice organisations, is expected to deepen the knowledge of participants about advocacy and its
relationship to: Politics and Democracy; Citizenship and Rights; Power, Empowerment and Citizen Education and Action.

It will also equip participants with basic skills and knowledge in: visioning; contextual analysis; problem/issue identification; analysis and prioritisation; power mapping; goal/objective setting; analysis of advocacy arenas and strategies; message development, reports and media; public outreach and mobilisation; lobbying and negotiation; advocacy leadership and coalition building; and assessment of success.

The course involves 60 hours of reading, on-line working groups, interaction with students and instructors/facilitators and assignments, and is offered over a 12-week period.

E-mail will be the main medium for the course, although participants will need to have periodic access to the World Wide Web although part of the readings and assignment will be distributed via CD-ROM.

The organizers say the course will be based on a participatory, active learning approach, with an emphasis on peer-to-peer learning. Participants will do the required readings, prepare interim and final assignments and participate in group discussions.

The main text for the course will be “A New Weave of Power, People, and Politics: An Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation” written by Lisa VeneKlasen and Valerie Miller.

There will be a maximum of 25 participants on the course and students who successfully complete the course will receive a Certificate of Attendance.

Rights Commissioner, UNESCO To Convene Workshop On Publication To Combat Racism

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will hold a joint workshop in February with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to develop materials and training courses for teachers and other opinion leaders on eliminating prejudice and fostering tolerance.

The workshop will be held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France, from February 19 to 20, 2003.

Aimed at developing a publication to help combat racism and foster tolerance, the workshop is being convened pursuant to the Revised Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, adopted by the UN General Assembly in its resolution A/RES49/146.

The workshop will develop documentation for a publication for university professors, young scholars and students on combating racism and racial discrimination in its contemporary forms and fostering tolerance.

The publication will analyze the problems of racism and racial discrimination in relation to specific themes, such as education, health, HIV/AIDS, employment, migration, development, administration of justice, contemporary forms of slavery, the media, including new information technologies, and double discrimination based on gender and race, making reference to specific empirical data when appropriate.

Its objective will be to give university students a better understanding, on a cross-cultural basis, of the phenomenon of racism in different thematic areas, how it manifests itself, the degree of exclusion which exists, and how racism can be prevented and combated.

The publication will also provide practical examples of overcoming racism in the specific area of concern with the aim of generating interest and ideas among students on how they can get engaged in the fight against racism outside of university.

At the end of each chapter, it will make practical suggestions on how to introduce the subject to students, on questions that could be raised to generate discussions among the students and on ideas for further research by students.
A third objective of the publication will be to train educators to raise interest in the topic of racism, to incite students to have a better understanding of the benefits of diversity, and to motivate students to become involved in overcoming racism.

Eleven experts have been invited to present background papers analyzing the problems of racism and racial discrimination in relation to specific themes, making reference to empirical data when appropriate. Reference will also be made to strategies that are being used to improve the situation of victims, including examples from the national level.

Participants at the workshop will include member States of the UN, specialized agencies and UN bodies, educational experts, national human rights institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), youth representatives and other representatives of civil society.

Topics at the workshop include: “Racism in a changing world”, to be presented by Mr. Doudou Diène, the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; “Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance relating to education”, to be presented by Ms. Katarina Tomasevski, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education; “Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance relating to health” to be presented by Ms. Cristina Torres of the Pan-American Health Organization; and “Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance relating to HIV/AIDS”, to be presented by Ms. Shalini Bharat, a professor and Head of Unit for Family Studies, at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai, India.

Other topics are “Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance relating to contemporary forms of slavery”, to be presented by Ms. Jessica Reitz, the Development and Outreach Director at Free the Slaves in Washington D.C.; “Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance relating to employment” to be presented by Mr. Julio Faundez, a Professor of Law at University of Warwick in the United Kingdom; “Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance relating to migration”, to be presented by Mr. August Gächter, a senior researcher at the Centre for Social Innovation in Vienna, Austria; and “Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance relating to the administration of justice”, to be presented by Ms. Leila Zerrougui, a member of the UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights.

Also to be discussed at the workshop are: “Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance relating to the media, including new information technologies”, to be lead by Mr. Bent Sørensen, the Head of Unit Information and Communication at the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia in Vienna; “Gender dimension of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance”, to be presented by Ms. Sapana Malla, Coordinator of Women Law and Development in Kathmandu, Nepal; and “The international framework to combat racism with specific emphasis on the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)”, to be presented by Ms. January-Bardill, a member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

**WAN Launches New Resource for Shaping Future Of the Newspaper**

As part of its efforts to ensure the future survival of newspapers worldwide, the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) has introduced a major new resource for business ideas, case studies and the latest research and information to devise their strategies for the future.

WAN launched a new web site for its “Shaping the Future of the Newspaper” (SFN) project, offering a wide range of materials to benefit the newspaper industry.

Mr. Larry Kilman, WAN’s Director of Communications, said in a statement: “In addition to strategy reports on new operational and strategic developments in the press, the SFN project
now offers, through its website, a wide variety of studies, data, case histories, business ideas and research drawn from WAN conferences, seminars and elsewhere.”

The SFN project was created by WAN and its strategic business partners to identify, analyse and publicise all important breakthroughs that could benefit the future of newspapers all over the world. The site can be found at http://futureofthenewspaper.com

Among other resources, SFN is now providing WAN members and subscribers with a virtual library of case studies and business ideas, categorised by topic such as advertising, circulation and distribution, on-line and digital publishing, editorial content, management, press freedom and laws, and media ownership.

The site also offers research and evidence that shows that newspaper advertising works and step-by-step instructions on how to conduct advertising effectiveness research.

Other resource materials include model newspaper job descriptions, PowerPoint presentations on SFN topics such as the media lifecycle, key performance indicators and new media developments, and essays and articles on developments in the industry.

The site provides access to electronic versions of World Press Trends from 1997 to the present date, with detailed tables and charts of newspaper trends in 67 countries: number of titles, circulation, total sales and newspaper reach, readership age group, advertising revenues, top ten lists, macroeconomic and demographic data and much more.

The centrepiece of the site is the SFN strategy reports. There are two currently in progress - on Added Value Advertising and The Distribution Revolution. WAN promises that they will soon join six others already published: Customer Relationship Management; Internet Strategies Revisited; Strategies for a Converging World; Editorial Measurement; and The Value Driven Newspaper.

The site also hosts e-mail forums on SFN topics. WAN is currently adding additional information to the site which it promises will be updated with new information frequently.

The SFN project is conducted by WAN with the support and advice of its partners: PubliGroupe, the Swiss-based international advertising and promotion group; Telia, the Sweden-based international telecommunications company; WRH Marketing, the marketing and distribution organisation of Swiss-based WRH Walter Reist Holding AG; MAN Roland, a company for newspaper production systems; UPM-Kymmene, one of the world’s leading printing paper producers; and Unisys, a worldwide supplier of solutions, services and innovative technology to the publishing industry.

The Paris-based WAN, the global organisation for the newspaper industry, represents 18,000 newspapers. Its membership includes 71 national newspaper associations, individual newspaper executives in 100 countries, 13 news agencies and nine regional and world-wide press groups.

New Website X-rays Political Parties Funding In Britain

A new website hosted in the United Kingdom is providing facts and figures to journalists and the public on the funding of political parties.

A project of the New Politics Network financed by a grant from the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust Limited, the site examines the issue of whether state funding should be extended.

The New Politics Network is an independent political and campaigning think tank, concerned with issues relating to democratic renewal and popular participation in politics.

Visitors to the web site, http://www.cleanelections.com, can use the “Who Funds Who” section to see where a political party’s money comes from and read profiles of leading donors. Facts turned up by the site include:

• The UK Treasury is now the biggest backer of the Conservative party, topping even the £5 million (about N1billion) donated by John Paul Getty.
Just six donors provided more funding for the political parties in 2001 than all their membership subscriptions combined.

Banning big donations and replacing them with state funding would cost no more than £30 million (about N6 billion) a year - less than 1 percent of 1 percent of the government’s annual expenditure.

The site looks at the rival proposals for reform, and makes a suggestion of its own: a system of “Clean Money” where individuals could register, for free, as supporters of the party of their choice. Each supporter would attract about £10 (about N2,000) of government funding to the party.

Jason Buckley, coordinator of cleanpolitix.com, said: “It’s a bit like a voucher system: each citizen is given a ticket to political participation which they can use as they want, if they want. Coupled with a ban on large donations, it would mean the parties’ finances really would rise or fall with their support in the country. That has to be much fairer than now, when a party haemorrhaging support can be kept alive artificially by a few tame millionaires.”

Peter Facey, director of the New Politics Network, argued that “For politics to be effective, getting more people involved is as important as the money. Traditional loyalties have broken down and people are suspicious of the parties. This is a way of connecting with voters who may not know a single person who is a member of a political party.”

Linking African Women Entrepreneurs Through ICT

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has launched an initiative to link African Information and Communication Technology (ICT) entrepreneurs living in Africa with those living in the Diaspora.

The goal of the programme is to help bridge the digital divide in Africa by providing women with access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) to help improve their livelihoods. It works by fostering and supporting collaborations to strengthen African women entrepreneurs and their use of ICT.

UNIFEM is working to build strategic partnerships with African IT entrepreneurs in the Diaspora to harness their financial resources and IT and business expertise to tackle the challenges of feminised poverty.

Under the initiative, UNIFEM will provide training for African women’s organisations and business associations in the use of ICTs, increase their access to financial support, and help them create networks between entrepreneurs in the Diaspora and in Africa, as well as private-sector and foundation partnerships.

A Global Advisory Committee comprised of African IT entrepreneurs living in the Diaspora and in Africa, as well as representatives from the private sector and the UN system, worked with UNIFEM to develop this programme.

Through UNIFEM’s programme, Advisory Committee members hope to address the need for country policies that facilitate Internet connectivity and provide low-cost internet access in order to make technology a part of African women’s everyday lives.

Despite having 54 countries and over 700 million people, Africa houses only one percent of the world’s internet users. There are an estimated 1.5 telephone lines per 100 people, as compared with 64 per 100 people in the United States.

One of the difficulties of Internet connectivity is that despite the fact that Africa is a poor continent, the cost of information and communication equipment is very high.

UNIFEM hopes that this problem will be addressed through policy and infrastructure development. Many however feel that political will at very high levels of government will be necessary to create the infrastructure needed to bring ICTs to African women.

More information about the initiative may be obtained from Micol Zarb at UNIFEM. Telephone: 1212 906-5463, E-mail: micol.zarb@undp.org.
ANNUAL REPORTS

IFJ Calls for New Safety Culture, Says 67 Journalists, Media Staff Killed in 2002

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has called for a new culture of safety awareness that will reduce the risks to reporters without diminishing the media’s right to cover the stories that need to be reported.

IFJ’s General Secretary, Aidan White, made the call in Brussels, Belgium, while announcing a total of 67 deaths in its 2002 report of journalists and media staff killed while on duty.

The number includes 19 other cases, which are still being investigated but may not be related to the victims’ work as journalists. It said the total was substantially lower than the 100 deaths it recorded in 2001.

White said 2002 has been a “year of targeting” in which investigative reporters on three continents died in separate assassinations for pursuing stories that expose terrorism, corruption or criminal activity.

“These journalists paid the ultimate price for their stories,” he said, insisting that: “It is time for the international community and the media industry to join hands in a new campaign to hunt down those who target journalists for asking the tough questions that help keep democracy intact.”

“The world is an increasingly dangerous place for working journalists,” said White, adding: “We need a new culture of safety awareness that will reduce the risks to reporters without diminishing the media’s right to cover the stories that need to be reported.”

White stressed that “Governments have a responsibility to bring killers to justice and in these cases we know from sources on the ground that more can and should be done.”

He warned that the targeting of journalists would continue “so long as governments fail to crack down hard on those who practice censorship by violence.”

World Political Tensions Eroded Press Freedom In 2002, Says RSF

Twenty-five journalists were killed in 2002 because of their opinions or for simply doing their jobs, while at least 692 were arrested, Reporters without Borders (RSF) said in its annual report on the state of the media worldwide last year.

According to the organisation, although more than 30 other murders of journalists last year are still being investigated, as at January 1, this year there was no evidence linking their deaths to journalistic activity. It said as in 2001, Asia was once again the most dangerous continent for journalists, with 11 journalists killed.

It noted that the number of arrests, physical attacks and threats against journalists soared last year, even though fewer were killed and the number of censorship cases increased only slightly.

RSF said 1,420 journalists were physically attacked or threatened, while at least 389 media outlets were censored. On 1 January 2003, 118 journalists were in prison around the world.

It observed that religious and ethnic tension made working conditions for journalists very bad as at least 20 were threatened during riots in northern Nigeria after a newspaper article about the Miss World contest.

It said governments used and abused press laws allowing them to close media temporarily or permanently, ban foreign publications or clamp down on some kinds of information with the result that 389 media outlets were censored around the world last year.

RSF also observed that the fight against terrorism launched by the United States and its allies after the September 11, 2001 attacks damaged freedom of the press as many governments stepped up and justified their repression of opposition or independent voices using anti-terrorism as an excuse.

It said many anti-terrorist laws passed in the world last year contained clauses undermining a journalist’s right not to reveal sources of information.
According to RSF, “Protection of these sources was a major issue during the year. Under authoritarian regimes, but also democratic ones, dozens of journalists were questioned, placed under official investigation, arrested or threatened for refusing to reveal their sources, especially in cases of terrorism.”

**CPJ Says 19 Journalists Killed For Their Work In 2002**

A total of 19 journalists were killed worldwide for their work in 2002, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), which says it is the lowest number since it began monitoring attacks on the press in 1985.

But the CPJ said it was continuing to investigate the cases of four journalists who are missing and 13 others whose killings may have been related to their professional work.

According to the CPJ, of the 19 journalists killed in 2002, most were targeted in direct reprisal for their work, and their killers had not been brought to justice at year’s end.

The CPJ attributed the dramatic drop partly to a decline in the number of world conflicts. It said its research showed a direct correlation between the number of journalists killed on the job and the incidence of violent conflict, which can give those who target journalists the ability to do so with impunity because of the instability that war fosters.

It said another factor in the decreasing number of journalists’ deaths may be the result of the international attention that Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl’s kidnapping and murder early last year generated. In the wake of Pearl’s death, journalist safety became a priority for news organizations and many sent their staff to hostile-environment training, and reporters were better prepared in the field.

CPJ’s executive director, Ann Cooper, said: “While we are encouraged to see the number of deaths decrease this year, journalists are still being targeted and assassinated for doing their jobs. Drug traffickers in Brazil, paramilitary groups in Colombia, and corrupt politicians in the Philippines are trying to silence journalists through intimidation and murder, and it has to stop.”

**CFJE Says 46 Media Professionals were ‘Casualties of Truth’ in 2002**

The media continued to pay a heavy price in 2002 for reporting the truth with nearly four journalists being killed each month on the average, according to the Canadian Journalists for Free Expression (CFJE).

In a report on its Annual Survey of Fatal Attacks on the Media, the CFJE said 46 reporters, editors, media owners, camera operators as well as two adult children of journalists met violent deaths around the world in 2002.

The report, titled “Casualties of Truth”, noted that journalists died violently in 19 countries around the world and that Colombia continued to be the most dangerous country in which to be a journalist with 10 journalists murdered there alone, accounting for about one-fourth of the global total.

The CFJE said there had been fatal muggings of journalists that strongly appear to be common crimes and that these were not included in the report.

It said: “The deaths that make it into this report are the ones we believe strongly to be linked to a journalist’s work. Even years after a killing, conclusive evidence can be elusive; for this reason, we do not require a burden of proof as rigorous as that demanded by a court of law. And we would be delighted to withdraw a listing if it is authoritatively established that a death was unconnected to a journalist’s work.”
ATTACKS ON THE PRESS IN DECEMBER 2002

17 *ThisDay* Reporters, Editors Receive Death Threats

An unknown group, going by the name of Movement Against Attack on Prophet Mohammed (MAAPM), has written letters to 17 journalists with *ThisDay* newspaper threatening to kill them.

In the letter, dated November 28, 2002 and addressed to the editor of the newspaper, the group threatened to attack, “in the form of beheading and amputation,” some ‘Christian Reporters’ over a publication by the newspaper allegedly responsible for the recent riots in the northern Nigerian city of Kaduna. The group alleged that the “Christian” reporters conspired with Isioma Daniel, writer of the article alleged to be blasphemous to Prophet Mohammed by some Moslems.

The group also addressed similar letter to 16 other reporters. While the letter to Mr. Tunji Bello was apparently hand-delivered at the offices of the newspaper, the other 16 letters arrived by post.

In the letter to the editor of *ThisDay*, MAAPM wrote: “Sequel to the disappearance of Isioma Daniel who launched an irresponsible attack on our Prophet Mohammed in your recent publication after the declaration of fatwa on her, MAAPM hereby use this opportunity to inform you officially of an imminent attack which is inevitable on Christian reporters, who conspired with the aforementioned Isioma Daniel to bring down and blaspheme our Prophet Mohammed in pursuit of their Christian agenda, which is ridiculous and degrading to the Moslem community.

“Arrangement has been made to launch attack on the following reporters who we considered as accomplices to the offence committed by the lady who fronts for them. It will take the form of beheading and amputation to replace the sentenced Isioma Daniel.

They are: Victor Ifijeh, Yemisi Ezekiel, Chris Anucha, Mary Ekah, Josephine Lohor, Emmanuel Efeni, Isaac Namo, Joseph Ushigiale, Boluwaji Ikumawoyi, Samuel Ajayi, Abimbola Akosile, Patrick Ujeh, Jide Orintunsin, Samuel Famakinwa, Chris Nwachukwu and Simon Kolawole”.

The letter said further that: “no apology can rectify the damage that has already been done and retaliation is unavoidable and it will happen at the premises of ThisDay.” The group called its intended action a jihad which the police cannot stop.

The letter was signed by the secretary (Ustaz Alsherrif Azeez) of the group which headquarters’ address reads “Plot 30 Mohammadu Buhari Road, Kano” and Lagos branch office as “27B Kareen Ikotun Street, Egbeda, Lagos”.

On November 16, 2002, Miss Daniel, the Style Editor of *ThisDay* newspaper, wrote an article on the Miss World beauty pageant scheduled to take place in Nigeria on December 7 and questioned the opposition of some Muslim groups to Nigeria’s hosting of the contest. In the article titled: “The World at Their Feet,” she asked the question: “What would Muhammed think?” and answered it: “In all honesty, he would have chosen a wife from among them,” referring to the 60 contestants who had arrived Nigeria for the pageant.

Following the article, many Muslims in the northern part of Nigeria launched a series of attacks on the newspaper’s offices and staff, culminating in the imposition of a fatwa by the Zamfara State acting governor, Alhaji Mamuda Aliyu Shinkafi, on Miss Daniel, as well as on the newspaper’s editor, Mr. Eniola Bello, and the publisher, Mr. Nduka Obaigbena. Acting Governor Shinkafi, who addressed a rally in Gusau, the state capital, instructed all muslims to behead Miss Daniel as a religious duty.

**Reporter Alleges Threat to Life**

Mr. Adeolu Adeyemo, the Osun State correspondent of the Nigerian Tribune newspaper on December 16, 2002, alleged a threat to his life by a group of politicians in the state. He
did not name the group or any member of the group.

Adeyemo said the group which was not pleased with a story he authored on the arrest of 17 persons, including the Chief Personal Assistant to Governor Adebisi Akande, for alleged possession of firearms vowed “to deal with me.”

Adeyemo said he narrowly escaped being killed five days earlier, on December 11, when some people suspected to be hired thugs, accosted him along the Ikirun road, in Osogbo, the Osun state capital. The reporter said the thugs, who were brandishing cutlasses and other dangerous weapons and traveling in a Peugeot 504 saloon car, pursued him in his car which they tried to force to a stop.

When they failed to overtake his car, they let off pursuing him when he turned into a busy street.

Publisher Arrested, Detained

The police in Enugu state have arrested and detained Mr. Uche Maduemesi, the publisher of The Republican, a weekly tabloid.

His arrest and detention followed the publication of a story on the last edition of the tabloid which posed a question on the cause of death of the Commissioner of Police in Enugu, Mr. Daniel Anyogo, suggesting that he was poisoned.

After the publication, he was invited by the state Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Adamu Sule, and detained at the state Criminal Investigation Department on the orders of an assistant Commissioner of Police.

Since then, he has been transferred from one cell to another. He was said to have been transferred to a cell occupied by hardened criminals on the night of December 28, 2002 in unclear circumstances, but was brought out of the cell to his former detention place by a highly placed police officer who was unhappy with his being transferred at midnight.

The police, accompanied by the Special Assistant to Enugu State Governor on legal matters, Mr. Raymond Nnaji, have also reportedly searched Maduemesi’s office and home.

Nnaji is reported to have been seen in Mr. Maduemesi’s office with his official car marked Enugu 219, while the publisher said the governor’s assistant has been coming to see him in each of the cells he was transferred to. Mr. Maduemesi has also complained of strange people coming to enquire about him in the cells at odd hours.

JOURNALISM / PRESS FREEDOM AWARDS

Alfred Friendly Press Fellowships Invites Applications

The Alfred Friendly Press Fellowships (AFPF) programme is inviting applications from mid-career journalists for its 2003 programme.

Each year AFPF awards approximately 12 fellowships to mid-career print journalists usually between the ages of 25 and 35 from developing and transitional countries with an emerging free press. The successful applicants receive a six-month, in-depth, practical introduction to the professional and ethical standards of the U.S. print media.

Each Fellow is assigned as a staff reporter to a single American newsroom in a major or mid-size city for the duration of the programme. Typically attached to the city desk, fellows may rotate among other sections such as arts, business, editorial, features, sports, online, etc. Fellows must speak and write English fluently so that they can enter fully into daily newsroom activities. Guided by talented host reporters and editors, they get to see the realities of American society and the influence of the press on it.

The programme begins in June with a two-week Orientation Seminar in Washington DC - an introduction to U.S. journalistic practices that prepares fellows for living and working in the
US. Mid-term and final seminars also allow fellows to compare their experiences, evaluate their fellowships and discuss their impressions of the U.S. media. Fellows return to their home countries at the beginning of December.

The fellowship pays all costs of programme-related international and domestic U.S. travel and provides a monthly stipend to cover basic living expenses.

The minimum criteria for fellows are an excellent command of written and spoken English as all activities are conducted in English; early to mid-career status with at least three years of professional experiences as a print journalist; a demonstrated personal commitment to a career in journalist in the home country; and current employment as a journalism with an independent print media organization in the country of citizenship.

A typical AFPF fellow is 29 years old, has six years of print journalism experience and has spent little or no time in the US. Due to requirements of reporting in the US, preference is given to applicants who are proficient in using computers and driving cars.

Completed applications are accepted at the AFPF office between January 1 And February 1 for the program beginning in June. An application form can be downloaded from the AFPF website, http://www.pressfellowships.org. It may also be obtained from the AFPF office at: 1616 H Street, N.W., Third Floor, Washington, DC 20006. Telephone: 1 202-737-4414, Fax: 1 202-737-4416. E-mail: infor@pressfellowships.org.

Call For Nominations For “Courage in Journalism” Award

Nominations are being sought for the International Women’s Media Foundation’s 2003 Courage in Journalism Award. The award honors women working in the news media who have demonstrated extraordinary strength of character in pursuing their profession under difficult or dangerous circumstances, including physical danger, government oppression, political pressure or other intimidating obstacles.

This prestigious award carries a US$2,000 cash prize and a sculpture which symbolizes freedom and courage. Up to three recipients will be recognized in the award ceremonies to be held in New York and Los Angeles in the United States in October 2003.

Any full-time, part-time or freelance woman reporter, writer, editor, photographer or producer is eligible for nomination for the award.

All nominations must be in English. The nomination form must be completed by the candidate’s supervisor, colleague or other professional associate, and include a statement on why the candidate should be considered for the IWMF Courage in Journalism Award. The form is available online at from http://www.iwmf.org/courage/nominate.php

The nomination should also include a brief biography of the candidate, highlighting her work as it relates to the award; a resume or curriculum vitae of the candidate; examples of her work and letters of support from professional associates, which is optional.

All nominations must be submitted between January 1 and March 14, 2003 and completed nominations, including all supporting documents, must be received by the IWMF no later than March 14. Materials can be submitted by e-mail, fax, regular mail or courier service.

The winners of the award will be announced on World Press Freedom Day, May 3, 2003. Further information may be obtained from Amy Johnson; Director of Programs; e-mail: ajohnson@iwmf.org or at IWMF; 1726 M Street, NW, Suite 1002; Washington, DC 20036. Telephone: 1 202 496-1992, fax 1 202 496-1977.

UNICEF Sponsors Award For Africa Radio Reports Featuring Children

Innovative African radio broadcasters, who involve children in their programming as active participants, are invited to apply for a new United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) broadcasting award.

The 2002 Radio Prize, co-sponsored by OneWorld, seeks to honor outstanding African radio that involves children at every level and covers young people’s issues with both sensitivity
and dynamism as well as programming in which children play a major role as presenters, reporters, producers and editors and will be recognized.

The deadline for submissions is January 31, 2003.

The winning broadcaster will receive professional-quality radio equipment. The prize-winning entry will also be featured on the UNICEF website, while all finalist entries will be posted on the OneWorld radio website.

All entries must be able to prove that children are genuinely involved in the content and production of a programme. Judges warn that child presenters are one thing, but children must also have a say in what goes into a programme or series. The programme must allow them to express their views, set the agenda, tell their story, and must make an effort to involve children from all parts of society.

Judges will also give preference to programmes that tackle serious issues in a child-friendly way, that contain some kind of rights-based material that’s relevant to children’s everyday lives.

Audio submissions should be a maximum of 10 minutes in duration, and must come with a written description of the programming. The submission could be a highlights package or an extract from a programme. Longer submissions will not be considered.

If samples are in a language other than French or English, a written translation in English must be supplied.

Samples can be any format as long as they are good quality. The preferred digital format is MP3 - and each file should not be bigger than 3.6 MB. Submissions can include music, however broadcast featuring the voices of children is the focus.

All entries must have been broadcast during 2002.

Entries should be sent to: Jackie Davies, Radio Manager, OneWorld International, 17th Floor, 89 Albert Embankment, Vauxhall, London, SE17TP, UK.

Telephone queries can be made to +44-207 735-2100, while faxes can be sent to +44-207 840-0798, and emails can be sent to jackie.davies@oneworld.net.

**Nominations Sought for 2003 Commonwealth Broadcasting Awards**

The Commonwealth Broadcasting Association is now accepting applications for its 2003 Awards, which honor exceptional news features, outstanding local children’s programming, cost-effective engineering, and contributions to public service broadcasting in Commonwealth countries.

The 2003 Awards will be presented at the annual CBA Conference this October in Abuja, Nigeria.

The CBA Award for Exceptional News Features, sponsored by Rolls-Royce, is granted to a journalist or media organization for a piece, no more than 10 minutes in length, which pushes the boundaries of media freedom.

The feature can be on any topic, but should contain exclusive or investigative material gathered in difficult circumstances.

CBA also grants an award for Outstanding Local Children’s Programming to encourage high quality, innovative, local programming for children in the Commonwealth. The award, which is sponsored by UNICEF, honors programs for children that deal with issues such as HIV/AIDS, the education of girls, immunization, and child protection.

The Award for Cost-effective Engineering, sponsored by the International Broadcasting Convention (IBC), is given to a team or individual for reducing production costs or increasing effectiveness through a particular technique. IBC also provides bursaries for some award entrants from developing countries to visit its annual convention in Amsterdam.

Senior executives in CBA member organizations can also nominate someone who has made an exceptional contribution to public service broadcasting for the Elizabeth R Award. The
award is given to someone who has made a major impact on the quality of broadcasting in a particular area either as a campaigner, performer, manager or inventor. Nominations and entry forms, which are available from the CBA at http://www.cba.org.uk/awardscba.htm, should be sent by June 1, 2003, to the CBA Secretary-General at 17 Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 1AA, United Kingdom. Tel.: +44-20 7583-5550. Fax: +44-20 7583-5549. E-mail: cba@cba.org.uk

"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

Media Rights Monitor
Published by:

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