Freedom of Information Goes Through Second Reading In New National Assembly

The Freedom of Information Bill, which was re-presented to the new National Assembly last month following the failure of the dissolved Federal Legislature to pass it, has gone through a second reading in the House of Representatives.

After the second reading, the Bill has been referred to the House committees on Information, Human Rights, and Judiciary for vetting. The committees are expected to report back to the Committee of the whole House for the third reading and passage of the Bill.

Re-presenting the Bill to the House of Representatives, Honourable Jerry Ugokwe said the Bill which seeks to promote access to Information is crucial for democratic values and norms, which he described as transparency and accountability.

According to him, “No act of corruption can be successfully prosecuted without access to information.”

He therefore enjoined his colleagues to speed up the enactment of the Bill into law in the general interest of the socio-political development of Nigeria.

Speaking in the same vein, Honourable Farouk Lawan, the former chairman of the Committee on Information in the dissolved House of Representatives who now head the Committee on Finance, said the Bill “is very important especially under the kind of system we operate in Nigeria today”.

Arguing that the Bill is “crucial and very important” to democracy, Honourable Lawan said: “we recognize some institutions that have to be restricted for security reasons, but the institutions of democracy will be strengthened if we enact the Bill”.
Lawan admonished his colleagues: “Pass this Bill and we would have opened up great success for our democracy.”

Honourable Abdul Oroh, Deputy Chairman the Committee on Human Rights, added his voice to the calls for the enactment of the Bill.

The former Executive Director of the Civil Liberties Organization (CLO) was of the view that the Bill would promote the socio-political and economic values of the country.

Oroh said: “Indeed, secrecy or lack of access to official information undermined participation in democratic processes and governance.”

Contributing, Honourable Victor Lar (from Plateau State) argued that the press and legislators would not be able to perform their constitutional duties without access to Information. He said: “if passed, we would have grown the necessary ingredients for transparency and accountability.”

Honourable Abike Dabiri, the Chairman of the House Committee on Media and Public Affairs, advised her colleagues to enact the Bill without further delay as the society has so much to benefit.

A strong indication that the Bill would receive accelerated passage emerged as no lawmaker opposed the Bill during the debate. Consequently, the Bill was referred to three committees, namely Information, Human Rights and Judiciary, for final vetting. The Committees are expected to report back to the committee of the whole house for third reading and possibly passage.

Various stakeholders and interest groups have welcomed the accelerated consideration the Bill is receiving. Mr. Edetaen Ojo, Executive Director of Media Rights Agenda (MRA), which hosts the secretariat of the Freedom of Information Coalition, said despite the disappointment arising from the experience of the last four years when the former National Assembly failed to pass the Bill before it was dissolved in June, he was hopeful that it would sail through this time around.

He noted that the absence of a law giving members of the public a right of access to information belied President Olusegun Obasanjo’s often stated commitment to fight corruption in all its facets in Nigeria and consequently undermined the government’s efforts to attract foreign investments into the country.

In a statement in Abuja, the Press Freedom and Human Rights Bureau of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Abuja Council, expressed its appreciation over the determination of lawmakers to enact the Bill into law.

“It is an indication that our lawmakers are responsive and sensitive to the request of the society” NUJ, Abuja council stated.

During a courtesy visit to the Speaker of House of Representatives, Honourable Aminu Bello Masari recently, the Executive Council of the Abuja Council of the NUJ, led by its Chairman, Mr. Abdul Adebayo Jeli, requested the Speaker to speed up the process of enactment of the Bill into law as everybody in the country stands to benefit from the Law.

The Freedom of Information Bill was first presented to the House of Representatives in 1999—one of the first bills to go before the National Assembly after its inauguration. It made impressive progress through the legislative process culminating in a public hearing held in October 2001 at which all speakers expressed strong support for it and canvassed its speedy enactment into law. But for reasons which are not clear, the Legislature failed to pass it before its dissolution in June this year.

**Criticisms Force National Assembly To Withdraw Journalists’ Code**

Following widespread criticisms, the National Assembly has withdrawn a code of conduct for journalists it issued early in the month to regulate the personal and professional conduct of media representatives covering the Federal Legislature.
The code was withdrawn for “review” by the management of the National Assembly 10 days after its initial release as various organisations and individuals rose in unison to condemn it.

The groups and individuals had contended that the code was meant to curtail the ability of journalists to cover the National Assembly in an independent manner and insisted that it should be withdrawn. They also pointed out that there was already an existing code of ethics for Nigerian Journalists approved by the Nigerian Press Organisation (NPO), which the National Assembly was incompetent to issue such code and called on all journalists and media stakeholders to reject it.

By the document, titled “General Conduct for NASS Correspondents” the National Assembly management drew up another code alongside the operating self-regulatory Code of Ethics for Nigerian Journalists and the IFJ Code of Conduct for Journalists.

The nine-point code stipulates among others that National Assembly correspondents must confirm all sensitive information from the Assembly management before publication. It also warned that: “Speculative journalism will attract appropriate punitive action.” Though the code has been withdrawn for review

Among those that condemned the code and called for its repeal are Media Rights Agenda (MRA), the International Press Center (IPC), the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Journalists for Democratic Rights (JODER) the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), and ThisDay newspapers. Individuals who also condemned the code include the Secretary of the NUJ Abuja Council, Mr. Iyobosa Uwugiaren; the Vice President (North) of the Nigerian Guild of Editors, Mallam Kadir Yakassai; and the Nigerian Television Authority’s (NTA) Public Affairs and International Relations Manager, Mr. Kehinde Ogundimu.

In a statement issued in Lagos by its Publications Officer, Mr. Ayode Longe, MRA insisted “that it is not within the competence of the National Assembly to stipulate a Code of Conduct for journalists, particularly when such a Code is intended to regulate how journalists relate with this arm of government and cover its activities.” MRA said it found “the provisions of the Code and the spirit behind it undemocratic and high-handed.”

MRA argued that “Journalists, as the watchdogs of the society, are constitutionally obliged to hold the government accountable to the people,” maintaining that “the Code is obviously a leash with which the Federal Legislature seeks to restrict investigative journalism and censor the reports of journalists on its activities.”

It drew the attention of the lawmakers to the fact that “various codes already regulate the practice of the journalism profession in Nigeria,” and cited the Code of Ethics issued by the Nigerian Press Council and the NPO, which is made up of the Newspapers Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN), the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), and the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE), as well as the IFJ Principles on the Conduct of Journalists issued by the International Federation of Journalists as a standard of professional conduct for journalists engaged in gathering, transmitting, disseminating and commenting on news and information.

MRA called on the National Assembly to focus its energies on its legislative functions, which MRA noted that it has so far almost virtually ignored, rather than chasing after its own shadow.

The IPC, in its reaction, said: “The expectation of the Nigerian media is that the new National Assembly would contribute to good governance, openness, accountability and transparency by taking steps towards the passage of the Freedom of Information law and other measures that would enhance freedom of the press and the right of the public to know.”

The July 20, 2003 edition of ThisDay newspaper editorial on the issue pointed out that “it is not the prerogative of news subjects to prescribe ethical conduct for journalists,” adding that innocuous as some of the clauses of the code may be, they “were only a mask for the dangerous ones”.

It specifically castigated the directive that the National Assembly must approve all sensitive stories before publication, as well as the threat that speculative stories would attract
appropriate punishment, saying that they were unreasonable. It argued that the first amounted to pre-publication censorship while the second was not only nebulous but also more pernicious. It advised the National Assembly that the best it could ask for is that journalist should seek for its own side of any such story before publication.

The newspaper questioned the condition in the code providing for “yearly renewal of a correspondent’s accreditation” upon satisfactory compliance with all the provisions of the code and unquestionable exemplary behaviour, describing it as “an insipient censorship.”

It called on the National Assembly to follow laid down procedures of seeking redress when journalists err and reminded it that the Constitution also gives the press the power “to monitor the government on behalf of the governed.”

The IFJ, the world’s largest organization of journalists, in a statement by its Secretary, Aidan White, said it had hoped “the new National Assembly would accelerate the much debated Freedom of Information Law and other measures that would enhance freedom of the press and access to information in Nigeria.” Mr. White said the adoption of the code, which he described as “restrictive and unilateral”, without consultation with the professionals did not live up to expectations.

Mr. Adewale Adeoye, Chairman of JODER, maintained that the code if not nipped in the bud would militate against the Freedom of Information Bill and wondered why the Federal Legislature did not consult with the NPO and the Nigerian Press Council before it came out with the code.

The Abuja Council of the NUJ, in a statement by its secretary, Mr. Iyobosa Uwugiaren, said the code “is against all known local and international laws and convention, predicated on ignorance about the mission and mandate of the press,” adding that Section 39 of the Constitution guarantees every citizen the right to freedom of expression, as well as freedom to hold opinions, receive and impart ideas without interference.

Mr. Uwugiaren said the NUJ was shocked that while pressure was being put on the National Assembly to expunge obnoxious laws that hinder press freedom, the bureaucracy of the Assembly was issuing “a barbaric code of conduct”. He observed that only experienced journalists were posted to cover the National Assembly and called on press freedom groups all over the world to join the council in condemning the “anti-press” code.

Other provisions of the code stipulate that:
• no correspondent shall be expected to move over to the state box or the high table as the case may be while a function is in progress;
• the major guiding principle of every correspondent in the National Assembly in the discharge of his/her duties shall be to promote national interest, development and the sustenance of democracy amongst others;
• the importance of the National Assembly demands that correspondents should be decently dressed, befitting the noble profession of journalism and to conduct themselves honourably at all times;
• a correspondent shall be required to maintain a high sense of personal discipline and decorum while carrying out his/her duties in both chambers of the National Assembly;
• every National Assembly correspondent is expected to be at the press center when he/she is not in the press gallery and henceforth, it shall be an offence to loiter at the foyer without just cause;
• all correspondents should switch off their GSM handsets while in the two press galleries and other meetings;
• and yearly renewal of a correspondent’s accreditation shall be upon satisfactory compliance with all the above and unquestionable exemplary behaviour.

It is a well established principle in journalism, supported by the growing jurisprudence of international judicial bodies and national courts, that the conduct of journalists should not be regulated by any government body, but only by professional bodies or associations of journalists.
Three clauses in the code are especially obnoxious and go against the code of ethics for journalism and press freedom worldwide. The three are the stipulations that: National Assembly correspondents must confirm all sensitive information from the Assembly’s management before publication; that speculative journalism will attract appropriate punitive action; and yearly renewal of a correspondent’s accreditation shall be upon satisfactory compliance with all the above and unquestionable exemplary behaviour.

The directive that correspondents must confirm all sensitive information from the Assembly management before publication, constitutes, as ThisDay newspaper has noted, prepublication censorship. It also goes against the grain of Article 1 of the NUJ code of ethics which precludes external interference in the editorial decision making process of the media.

Article 1 of the NUJ code provides that: “Decision concerning the content of news should be the responsibility of a professional journalist.”

The provisions of the National Assembly’s code relating to “speculative journalism” are so vague that even with the best of intentions, which is apparently missing in this case, they will be open to abuse.

The stipulation that the journalists’ accreditation would be renewed yearly upon “satisfactory compliance” with all the provisions of the code and “unquestionable exemplary behaviour” is clearly a device to enable the National Assembly exclude journalists who are critical or publish unfavourable reports from continued coverage of the National Assembly.

It is therefore intended to control what the media publishes or broadcast, to achieve personal political and economic aggrandizement, and to arbitrarily sanction journalists who do no toe their line.

Since the press is constitutionally empowered to hold the government accountable to the people, the National Assembly, which is an arm of government, should not have the power to determine which journalists is allowed to cover its activities based on the exercise of a wide and unfettered discretion to enforce a vague regulation.

The National Assembly has, however, withdrawn the code with apologies, although it claims that the code is going for further review.

In a letter titled “Retraction of Code of Conduct for Journalists Operating in the National Assembly”, signed by the National Assembly’s Assistant Director of Information, Mallam Bako M. Lawan, the Legislature said the code was being withdraw for further review to uphold the core democratic principles of freedom of speech, association and popular participation in decision making.

The letter said: “This development is necessitated by the need to allow for more broad based consultations with all stake holders, especially the National Assembly Correspondents, to ensure a more comprehensive and acceptable document, which due to oversight could not precede the initial exercise.”

It sought the cooperation of journalists for the attainment of the “highest professional standards and also to promote the cordial relationship between the National Assembly and the media,” saying that “… all embarrassment or inconveniences caused by the said publication (of the code of conduct) is also highly regretted”.

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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ARTICLE 19 To Update Freedom Of Expression Handbook

The Law Programme of ARTICLE 19, the Global Campaign for Free Expression, has launched a programme to update and expand its Freedom of Expression Handbook, first published in 1993, as well as its on-line counterpart, the Virtual Freedom of Expression Handbook.

As part of a newly funded project, ARTICLE 19 expects to produce a new Freedom of Expression Handbook by mid-2004. The handbook will include thematic chapters on a wide range of freedom of expression-related issues, including new areas of interest such as access to information, commercialisation of the media and on-line freedom of expression.

The new version of the handbook will be published in paperback, on-line and on CD-ROM and is expected to be a key tool for campaigners, public officials, lawyers, journalists and the judiciary alike.
The on-line and CD-ROM versions will also include case summaries of all freedom of expression cases decided by international courts and tribunals which are already available on-line at ARTICLE 19’s website at: http://handbook.article19.org, as well as a wide range of precedent-setting cases decided by national courts.

In order to fully exploit the possibilities offered by electronic publishing, these versions will also include relevant audio and video material as well as live links to on-line resources.

ARTICLE 19 is updating and expanding the handbook and its on-line counterpart, the Virtual Freedom of Expression Handbook, based on its belief that they both were, and still are, immensely successful resources.

The on-line handbook has received 90,000 hits to date while the published version has been universally praised for the quality of its content.

But ARTICLE 19 says they both need to be brought up-to-date to reflect new developments and to provide a more user-friendly and flexible, yet authoritative, freedom of expression “encyclopedia”.

**Highway Africa Award For The Innovative Use of New Media In Africa**

The role of African media in the “Information Society” is the theme of the 2003 Highway Africa conference, taking place in Grahamstown, South Africa, from September 8 to 10.

Organised and hosted by the Rhodes University Department of Journalism and Media Studies, and the South Africa Broadcasting Commission, the conference aims to bring African media into the centre of debates about the Global Information Society.

Now in its seventh year, the African Highway conference explores the journalistic, technological and political issues related to new media development in Africa and is aimed at journalists, academics, government officials, policy makers and business people from around the world with a special interest in Africa.

Highway Africa’s programme includes plenary and keynote presentations, panel discussions and hands-on workshops where delegates acquire practical skills and expertise.

Awards for the Innovative use of New Media in Africa are given annually at the Highway Africa conference to recognize the creative, innovative and appropriate use of new media technology in Africa. Judges look for innovative applications of new media in African journalism. Awards are given in three categories: individual/student, non-profit and corporate.

In the Individual and NG Categories: recognition will be given to communications, which find ways to overcome the limitations of the existing African infrastructure. For example, previous winners in the individual category include: Omololu Falobi, project director of Journalists Against Aids (JAAIDS) in Nigeria, who created an email distribution list to deliver a very successful newsletter on Aids to his wider community, and Africa almanac.com, which focuses on the history, achievements, economic developments, news, arts and culture of Africa.

In the Corporate Category: judges look for creative adaptation of global technologies in an African media context. Previous winners include SABC’s news research service NewsNet and Kiswahili online news service, Afrikaleo.com.

Other broad criteria: which apply to both categories, are the use of new media to benefit press freedom in Africa and encourage social empowerment in African communities. Ultimately the award aims to highlight innovations that result in African media benefiting from new ideas and developments in communications technology.

**U.N. Crime Convention to Enter Into Force on September 29**

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime is set to enter into force on September 29, U.N. officials have said.
The entry into force was made possible because, as at the end of June, 40 instruments of ratification of the treaty had been deposited with the UN.

Antonio Maria Costa, the executive director of the U. N. Office on Drugs and Crime, said: “With the entry into force of the convention, the international community will have demonstrated the political will to counter the worldwide challenge of organized crime by adopting a corresponding global response. Criminal groups have embraced today’s global economy and the sophisticated technology that goes with it. Until recently, our efforts to combat them have remained very fragmented.”

The convention is the first of its kind. States adopting it vow to adopt a series of crime-control measures, including the criminalization of participation in an organized criminal group, money-laundering, corruption and obstruction of justice.

About 147 countries have signed on to the Convention.

**Website for Young Reporters Seeks Submissions**

A recently launched website showcasing journalism by emerging reporters around the world, is seeking submissions from journalists for publication on the website.

Developed in close collaboration with the original team behind the BBC News Online website, the site, greatreporter.com, bills itself as a “global showcase for the work of young reporters” who face difficulties in getting published in the mainstream media.

The website’s founder, Richard Powell, said: “Not only will greatreporter.com showcase the work of young journalists in every country in the world, it will also provide regular interviews with already established players in the industry so readers can learn and be inspired by their own personal journeys.”

According to Powell, greatreporter.com also acts as a news agency for reporters and can provide payment if their material is purchased by editors externally. Once published, reporters will be able to add cuttings of their work to their portfolios.

More information can be obtained from the website: http://www.greatreporter.com

**Assemblyonline Invites CSOs to Join Online Discussion on WSIS**

Assemblyonline, an Internet medium which generates and disseminates information on democracy and democratic institutions in Nigeria, is inviting members of the civil society movement in Nigeria to participate in an online discussion forum on the forthcoming World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) scheduled to take place in Geneva, Switzerland, from December 10 to 12.

The online discussion forum is being initiated by Assemblyonline as the WSIS National Consultation for Nigerian civil society organisations and will be hosted on the Assemblyonline electronic group.

According to Assemblyonline’s project manager and moderator of the news group, Mr. Babatope Babalobi, participation in the WSIS process is important because the WSIS provides a good opportunity to create awareness, broaden social participation, open up the space for debates and discussions, to build consensus and basic agreements between multiple stakeholders on key information society issues, not only at global level, but also at national level, as well as give CSOs an opportunity to lead the process and thereby optimise their interests.

He said: “It is an excellent opportunity to lobby government to take action on ICT policy and raise awareness of the issues at national, regional and global levels.”

Mr. Babalobi lists the purpose of the National WSIS consultations as:

♦ influencing specific country level input into the WSIS process;
♦ forging interaction between government, civil society and the private sector;
♦ building skill, experience and confidence among CSOs to engage ICT policies;
♦ creating demand at the national level for government to implement ICT policies they subscribe to at international level; and
♦ linking international lobbying to lobbying at the national level

World Movement for Democracy: Third Assembly in South Africa Re-scheduled

The Steering Committee of the World Movement for Democracy has announced the re-scheduled dates for the World Movement’s Third Assembly, which will now convene on February 1 to 4, 2004 in Durban, South Africa.

The meeting was originally scheduled to take place in April of this year, but was postponed due to the war in Iraq.

The theme of the Third Assembly, which will take place at the International Convention Centre in Durban, remains “Building Democracy for Peace, Development, and Human Rights.”

The Assembly, which will bring together more than 500 democracy activists, practitioners, and scholars, will feature more than 40 workshops focused on regional challenges, areas of democracy work, and building functional networks across borders.

International Civil Society Forum on Democracy, Good Governance Holds in September

The International Civil Society Forum on Democracy, Good Governance and Civil Society will be held in Ulanbaatar, Mongolia, on September 8 to 9. It will immediately be followed by the Fifth International Conference on New and Restored Democracies (ICNRD), which will take place on September 10 to 12.

Civil society activists and advocates, academics, and media professionals focusing on civil society research and advocacy are invited to participate in the forum.

Topics to be covered at the forum include conceptual issues surrounding civil society and democracy, challenges to civil society, and strengthening civil society in the era of globalization.

The Fifth ICNRD, which will take place on September 10 to 12, will include a Parliamentarian Forum on September 11, in which parliamentarians will discuss their role in promoting democracy.

More information about the International Civil Society Forum can be obtained from: www.icsf-2003.mn, while more information about the Fifth ICNRD, is available at: www.icnr5-mongolia.mn/index.html

IRIN Calls for Photographs

The United Nations’ Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) is now calling for photograph submissions to its 2004 calendar.

Each year IRIN produces a calendar for distribution to members of the international community including donors, UN agencies and NGOs. Each month features a photograph from sub-Saharan Africa or Central Asia accompanied by a brief paragraph describing it.

Photographers and agencies are credited on the first page of the calendar along with a brief biographical paragraph and relevant contact information. They are further credited under each photograph. IRIN is not in a position to purchase photographs.
Digital images should be a minimum of A3 in size (420 mm x 297 mm) scanned at high resolution, 300 dpi, in JPG or tiff-format. Photographs should be a minimum of 8 X 6 in size and will not be returned.

Submissions should be sent to Joanne Clark Joanne@IRINnews.org. IRIN also maintains an extensive databank of on-line photos, which are used to enhance stories on the IRIN web site. Agencies and photographers are credited under each picture along with a hyperlink to their contact details.

Unless otherwise requested, all submissions to the IRIN calendar will be added to this photo library. The deadline for submissions to the calendar is August 10, 2003 however entries to the IRIN photo library may be made throughout the year.

For further information please contact Joanne Clark, Information and Liaison Officer, IRIN Geneva. E-mail: Joanne@IRINnews.org / JClark@un.org. Telephone: +41 (0)78 631 9996. Website: http://www.IRINnews.org

Restructuring In Government Media And Department

With the inauguration of President Obasanjo’s second term, some federal government’s Departments and media houses witnessed some changes in their managements. These include the Media and Publicity Department of the Presidency and of some state executives, the Federal Legislature as well as the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), and Daily Times of Nigeria PLC, etc.

Mrs. Oluremi Oyo, President of the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) was on June 5 appointed Special Assistant on Media and Publicity to President Obasanjo replacing Mr. Tunji Oseni. Her appointment followed the approval of her name and those of others as Special Advisers to the President by the National Assembly. A journalist of many years experience, she started her journalism carrier about 30 years ago at the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation now Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) as a News Assistant Trainee and rose through the ranks to become a Principal Editor. Thereafter, she moved to News Agency of Nigeria as Desk Editor in 1981. She entered the services of the Inter Press Service (IPS) in 1985 as Bureau Chief (Nigeria) from where she was appointed to her present position.

On June 27, Mr. Tonnie Iredia, former Director General of the National Orientation Agency (NOA) was appointed to take over from Mr. Ben Murray-Bruce as Director General of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA). Former Director of Publicity of President Obasanjo’s Presidential election campaign headquarters, Mr. Akin Osuntokun was appointed the Director General of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN).

Dr. Onukaba Adinoyi-Ojo, Managing Director of Daily Times of Nigeria PLC was reassigned as Senior Special Assistant (Public Communication and Media Affairs) to the Vice President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar. Mr. Adinoyi-Ojo was first appointed Special Assistant (media relations) to the Vice President at the inception of the fourth republic before he was seconded to Daily Times. Mr. Edwin Baiye, editor of Daily Times replaced Onukaba as managing director.

On August 11, Dr. Adinoyi-Ojo was appointed Managing Director of Daily Times after Dr. Olatunji Dare who rejected his appointment into the position.

Mr. Adinoyi-Ojo holds a Bachelor’s degree in Theatre Arts from the University of Ibadan, a Masters degree in Journalism from New York University and a doctorate degree in Performance Studies from Tisch School of Arts, New York. He was recalled from the United States of America where he was working with United Nations as information Officer to Iraq.

Mr. Baiye who replaced him as Managing Director was until his new appointment, the Executive Director, Publications, of the newspaper company. Mr. Baiye has worked in several newspaper houses, including The Guardian and Punch. He was formerly the Editorial Board Chairman of Daily Times.
West African Internet Forum holds In Abuja

The West African Internet Forum will take place in Abuja on August 26 to 28. The forum is following in the heels of the East African Internet Forum at ACT 2002 held in Nairobi, Kenya, last year and the Southern African Internet Forum organized by AITEC and Balancing Act in South Africa in April, this year.

WAIF will be a key platform for Internet Service Providers (ISPs), regulators, policy-makers and civil society organizations from throughout West Africa to meet, share knowledge and experiences and formulate best practice strategies for Internet development in the region. The Forum will be supported by the Internet Service Providers Association of Nigeria (ISPAN), the Nigeria Internet Group (NIG) and the African Internet Service Providers Association (AfrISPA).

The forum will examine issues such as the potential for growth in the West African Internet business and the challenges faced; the challenge for Internet regulators and how the regulatory framework can encourage Internet growth; online resolution of disputes in Africa; why Internet exchanges matter; cyber-crime and the challenge of creating the basis for trust for e-business; why ICANN matters and how Africa can get involved; the priorities for growing the Internet in West Africa; and why domain name issues matter.

In addition to presentations on various topics to be made by prominent players in the sector, there will be a facilitated group discussion to identify the policy actions that will aid Internet growth in West Africa. The facilitator will then work with the group to prioritise the key action points.

The Forum and all other ACT Forums and plenary sessions are open to ACT delegates. Full Summit details and information about how to register as a delegate can be obtained at: www.aitecafrica.com

IIAC’s Recommendations On Combating Corruption

The 11th International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC) held in May came out with a set of recommendations on combating fraud. The first part of the recommendations was published last month. Below are the rest of the recommendations:

Development Assistance
- Cooperation between existing international agencies addressing corruption must be enhanced, either through the creation of a new institution for this purpose or by making the existing agency established by the UNDP more effective.
- There is still considerable corruption in development projects. Information made available to the poor and vulnerable can greatly enhance their ability for them to assert their rights. There is a particular role for non-governmental organisations carrying information to those who need it. It would greatly assist our efforts if development agencies were seen to be applying the same standards of transparency and accountability in their own operations that they require of their development partners. Similarly, the operations of lending agencies would benefit were they to be open to effective external review.
- Our discussion of corruption in aid convinced us of the need for human rights and good governance practices to be integrated into the practices of donor agencies, which in turn should be subject to oversight by groups of independent citizens. Conditionality appears to have largely failed and other, more creative approaches must be developed to encourage appropriate reforms.
- We recommend that international financial institutions (IFIs) and donors should end the practice of insisting on privatisation as a condition of loans and allow for the consideration of the full range of public and private sector models.
- We recognise that post-war reconstruction poses particular challenges in devastated environments that lack the rule of law and requiring the rehabilitation of institutions,
communities and infrastructure and in which massive aid interventions flow very quickly but whose effectiveness is not always maximized. The complex issues involved call for further conceptual consideration and empirical investigation with a view to developing deployable anti-corruption systems and tools to contain corruption in post-war reconstruction.

**Industry Sectors**

- We believe that water and energy resources should be considered public goods, access to which is a fundamental human right. If privatized, the decision-making processes should be fully transparent, and strict conditions must be applied. These include a cap on profiteering, strict performance standards, and so-called ‘take-or-pay’ contracts prohibited. When it appears likely that officials in privatised water or energy utilities may have engaged in corrupt practices, an independent commission should investigate them together with any public agencies – including international financial institutions and export credit agencies – that may have financed the transactions. When international agencies are found to have financed such corrupt transactions, they – not the consumers – must bear appropriate responsibility for outstanding loans and credits.

- Corruption is endemic in the health and pharmaceuticals sectors from which no country is exempt. Research is manipulated, undue influence distorts licensing and listing, bribery is strong in promotional activities, counterfeit medicines and relabelled expired drugs are all having a devastating impact on patients and the costs of health services alike. In addition, standards should be developed by and between companies in the pharmaceutical industry, dealing with issues such as, inter alia, political and charitable donations, sales representatives and distributors. Case studies illustrated unambiguous instances of severe health and financial losses. Black markets abound in illegal organ sales and the use of ineffectual medical supplies, leading to ill-health and deaths. Organized crime networks have become involved in the corrupt trade in body parts and privatisation and unregulated competition in the provision of medical supplies have accelerated levels of corruption and fraud. The black market in health products requires much stronger regulation in the developed (consumer) countries, and greater attention paid by all countries to the ratification and implementation of relevant international convention. Governments must ensure that the patient, not the suppliers, is the focus and beneficiary of health care provision; that doctors and other health professionals adopt codes of conduct requiring them to disclose gifts and benefits received from the pharmaceutical industry; and that there is transparency in decisions concerning the acquisition of equipment and pharmaceuticals.

- Corruption in forestry calls for a wide range of responses, both legislative and non-legislative and addressing all aspects of the timber production and marketing chain. There has been an over-reliance on civil society to perform a monitoring role in a situation which can be extremely dangerous for them and for which groups are often ill-equipped. There is a need to work on a broad front as there is no single effective approach to containing corruption in the forestry sector.

**Public Sector**

- In the absence of a just, honest and independent judiciary and so the absence of the Rule of Law, much to which we aspire will lie beyond our reach, and many potential reforms will be frustrated. The needs of the judiciary must be met. We welcome efforts being made to strengthen the independence and integrity of the judiciary.

- In our review of depoliticising the civil service we were concerned at an apparent lack of tangible outcomes of past civil service reform exercises and stress the need to go beyond merely looking at reducing wage bills to focus on essential political, social and economic aspects. There is also a need to focus on the civil service as a whole, rather than on just separate parts of the service.

- Our review of the effectiveness of anti-corruption agencies versus institutional mainstreaming led us to conclude that controlling corruption is an issue of governance and of the quality of government policies, and it cannot be solved simply by the creation of an anti-corruption agency. These agencies can constitute an inefficient use of resources where a country
has weak capacity or a hostile policy environment. In countries with a better developed governance framework there is a whole web of anti-corruption agencies and accountability strands so that an agency, if created, has to work closely with all of them if it is to be effective. Most importantly, it is essential not to view the creation of an agency as a single “quick fix” but as only one aspect of an approach that has to address the whole spectrum of the problems that breed corruption. Even then, no agency can be successful without building a strong bond with civil society and gaining its cooperation.

- We reviewed the role being played by civil society in monitoring public procurement and identified its participation being critical for the development and enforcement of anti-corruption strategies, transparency, the raising of awareness and the facilitation of change. Change is possible and has been achieved in some countries with considerable savings flowing to the public good from clean public procurement practices.

- It was recognized that customs administrations are particularly vulnerable to corruption as their officials have direct, real time, discretionary access to tangible wealth while they are also often underpaid. As a consequence, corruption in Customs damages legitimacy and image, and is a major obstacle to international trade and development. A review of the available tools to counter corruption in Customs shows that the tools are available to enhance integrity and that what is now needed is their effective use in implementation. Case studies show that significant results can be achieved within a short time-frame were proper appeal channels are created, officers are made proud of their jobs, integrated border management (making Customs regulate cross-border movements of people as well as goods) can help; and IT offers solutions, but is not always foolproof. The World Customs Organization has developed useful tools, including a “road map” for assessing corruption in administration and performance indicators. There was some support for the development of an ISO standard for Customs administration.

- Corruption in the police is a common problem, and one best addressed by having it addressed by an independent institution rather than an internal police unit (although the latter may need to be chosen for reasons of resources or for social and political considerations). Leadership within the police force is critical, backed by strong political will within the government. Proper laws must enable graft fighters to take effective action against corrupt police officers. We welcome the initiative of Interpol in forming its International Group of Experts on Corruption (IEGC) and the global standards and best practices which it is promulgating. However, to fight corruption effectively within the police force the support of the community must be won through a combination of education and publicity.

- We again emphasize the importance of protecting whistle-blowers from reprisals and of providing witness protection where necessary. No anti-corruption campaign can succeed if employees, both in the public and the private sector, are fearful of reporting acts of corruption. We are aware that key witnesses have been unwilling to identify current influential politicians by name because of the inability of the judicial system in their countries to provide them with adequate security. Dependable complaints mechanisms form a vital strand in any effective anti-corruption framework.

**E-government**

- We recognised the potential for e-government to impact positively on corruption levels by increasing accessibility, and transparency, but these need to be aligned with wider public sector reform. Many governments are still at an early stage and need to initiate reforms on a small scale, and scale up as and when the utility of these is proven. Computerisation requires significant process re-engineering before it is undertaken to avoid the danger of simply modernising existing processes that already lack transparency and efficiency.

- We saw value in civil society organizations taking a much closer interest in the potential that e-government may offer for the reduction of corruption and the introduction of more open systems of administration. The OPEN system adopted in Seoul attracted particular interest.
Participants registered a broad concern regarding the potential for corruption in the area of e-government, particularly as in many countries one cannot assume equal access to technology to that the process has the potential to actually widen the gap between rich and poor.

**Private Sector**

- Professional and business ethics and education require the implementation of codes of ethics and ethics training from the top of an organisation down to the most junior staff. We reviewed a number of tools that have been developed for this purpose, including specific case studies and survey software. We believe that the use of examples drawn from real life best demonstrate the dilemmas which can occur, rather than subjecting staff to ethics courses which are overly theoretical.

- In examining the role of corporate governance in the fight against corruption we reviewed a series of initiatives, among them the TI Integrity Pacts, the TI Business Principles, the Wolfsberg principles, the Public What You Pay campaign, the Caspian Revenue Watch initiative and the United Kingdom government’s Extractive Industries Initiative. It was clear that there is no one specific area on which civil society should focus but that all can contribute to enhanced accountability across a broad range of approaches. In examining the role of lawyers in corporate governance we noted that lawyers are often perceived as conspiring with corrupt actors so that the lawyer’s image ranking somewhere between businessmen and politicians is therefore not surprising. We decided that when it comes to the lawyer employed by a business it is not a question of “either - or” - of “hired gun” or of “gate keeper”. A business lawyer is to some extent a “hired gun” but he also has a professional duty to warn and restrict his client to legality. The mere adoption of ethics codes does not stop corruption, but helps build institutions and confidence - and of particular importance is the development and enforcement of professional codes of conduct to ensure that lawyers stay within the bounds of the permissible.

- We discussed the lessons to be learned the recent scandals involving the accountancy profession in the United States and elsewhere. It was clear that a nature of the relationship between auditor and client would change if the auditor were required to be an investigator and that auditors are not presently qualified or trained to conduct to discharge a forensic role. We recognized that the profession itself has still not come to terms with the implications of the recent scandals. The profession, and individual corporations, face enormous reputational risks. Many felt that auditors need to be changed more frequently to disrupt the “network” that can otherwise develop between auditor and client; some felt that shareholders, not boards of directors, should appoint the auditors. Above all it is essential to restore public confidence in companies’ financial statements or investors will stay away and capital markets will continue to languish.

- Needs in the media include both a diversity of ownership and addressing problems of corruption within the journalists’ profession.

**Civil Society**

- We recognise the need to raise standards of transparency and accountability within civil society itself, in particular the need for effective codes of conduct including principles for the selection and recruitment of their staff as well as high standards of financial accountability. There is also an urgent need for civil society to pool resources and to work collectively and in a broader coalition in order to re-open the debate over international regulatory structures.

- We declare our commitment to continue to deepen and broaden our coalition and to work with a wider and more diverse range of citizen groups, consumer groups, environmentalists and trade unions on the basis of links first established at the 11th IACC.

- In addressing the central theme of our conference, we call upon faith-based institutions to raise the level of their involvement in addressing ethical and corruption issues, and identified a need for them to ensure that their own institutions live up to the practices they rightly advocate for others.
Finally, we discussed the way forward for civil society and exchanged experience as between different civil society organizations who are working on the corruption issue. The need is clear for civil society organizations to build alliances of the widest possible kind, drawing in organizations and people from all walks of life and of all political persuasion. In particular, we concluded that coalitions between civil society organizations and parliaments as well as with political parties deserve further exploration. The clear need was identified for civil society to monitor the performance of their governments in implementing their international obligations under the anti-corruption conventions to which they are party. In this context, Transparency International should consider broadening its scope and changing its emphasis from being on “transparency” to being on “accountability”, as the aim is to hold people accountable. Above all, to maintain their own credibility and legitimacy, civil society organizations must foster and adhere to the highest internal ethical standards.

Measurement

The ability to measure corruption levels and to track levels of progress provides an essential tool for our work. Methodological approaches need to be further developed with an emphasis on policy development.

In examining the measurement of corruption it was apparent from World Bank Institute data that trends in governance are not getting any better. Cross-country measurement tools have come a long way, but remain imperfect: they must be complemented by sound country work which in turn yields achievable anti-corruption strategies.

Many of our findings can be addressed by governments assembled at the Global Forum on Fighting Corruption Safeguarding Integrity to be held in Seoul shortly after our own proceedings conclude. To these we would add the observation that we would all greatly benefit if the commitments made at Global Forum I and Global Forum II could be reviewed and reported on publicly.

It is now 20 years since the first International Anti-Corruption Conference was held in Washington (1983), but since then the environment in which we live and work has changed dramatically.

New threats have emerged and new challenges posed to us. In a world of accelerated change, the one constant has been our common values. Our Conference has grown from a handful of committed organisations to a coalition that spans the globe. A subject once taboo can now be discussed openly, and by nations rich and poor.

The nexus between corrupt exporters in industrialised countries and political elites elsewhere has been exposed and is being addressed, which 20 years ago was unimaginable.

The regular return of assets looted by officials in developing countries and sheltered in the developed world, once but a dream is now within our grasp. Corruption is now rightly seen not simply as an economic problem, but one with equally strong social and political dimensions.

There is, too, now widespread recognition that the fight against corruption can only be waged successfully if all are involved, both within and outside government.

Chief Justices around the world have developed the Bangalore Statement of Global Principles on Judiciary Integrity, noted by the recent session of the U.N. Human Rights Commission, which will serve as a global benchmark.

At the United Nations itself there is the prospect of governments reaching a consensus on the steps to fight corruption that if achieved will be truly historic.

Youth are now organising with the vision of “A World Without Corruption”, and at our gathering the Youth Network Against Corruption (www.ynac.org) developed an imaginative action plan.

Increasingly, too, governments are recognising their people’s right to information and starting to appreciate both the positive benefits to governance of more open and participatory approaches and the beneficial impact this can have for citizens, and especially the poor.
We have passed from mere words and into the sphere of concrete and concerted action. As we continue in our efforts, we will do so in the conviction that the values we all share will stand us in good stead throughout the years ahead.

We express our thanks to the Chairman and members of the International Anti-Corruption Council and to the members of the Korean Organising Committee. We are deeply grateful to the Korean Ministry of Justice, which hosted the conference, and to the Korean Organising Office, in particular to Mr. Sang-ok Park, Mr. Keon-joo Lee, Mr. Jong-sang Lee, Mr. Lyun-sup Shin, and Ms Eun-jeong Kim.

We are also greatly indebted to Ms Gillian Dell and her committed team at Transparency International who have worked so diligently, so effectively and to such excellent effect on preparing the conference programme.

In closing, we express our gratitude to the government and people of the Republic of Korea, to the Mayor and citizens of Seoul and to Transparency International-Korea. Many of us experienced numerous acts of kindness and integrity from ordinary citizens as we have moved about their city. This must bode well for their society achieving its corruption-free goal.

We depart, saddened to leave but with a renewed sense of determination and purpose.

Seoul, 28 May 2003

The 2004 Media Ecology Association Awards For Academic Works

The Media Ecology Association (MEA) is calling for nominations for the 2004 Media Ecology Association Awards for publications and academic works in various categories.

The Marshall McLuhan Award for Outstanding Book in the Field of Media Ecology is open to books published in 2001 or later on any topic related to media ecology. Entry requirements are a letter of nomination or self-nomination and five copies of the book. Entrants may request simultaneous consideration for the Erving Goffman Award, the Susanne K. Langer Award, the Dorothy Lee Award, or the Lewis Mumford Award.

The Walter Benjamin Award for Outstanding Article in the Field of Media Ecology is open to articles, essays, reviews, and book chapters published in 2001 or later on any topic related to media ecology. Entry requirements are a letter of nomination or self-nomination and five copies of the publication. Entrants may request simultaneous consideration for the Erving Goffman Award, the Susanne K. Langer Award, the Dorothy Lee Award, or the Lewis Mumford Award.

The Erving Goffman Award for Outstanding Scholarship in the Ecology of Social Interaction is open to books and articles published in 2001 or later that focus on social situations, symbolic interaction, interpersonal communication (both face-to-face and technologically mediated), nonverbal communication, social space, temporal rhythms, rules of engagement, performance of roles, and the presentation of self in everyday life. Entry requirements are a letter of nomination or self-nomination and five copies of the publication. Entrants may request simultaneous consideration for the Marshall McLuhan Award or the Walter Benjamin Award.

The Susanne K. Langer Award for Outstanding Scholarship in the Ecology of Symbolic Form is open to books and articles published in 2001 or later that focus on the ecology of language, semantics, semiotics, codes, symbol systems, aesthetic form, etc. Entry requirements: Letter of nomination or self-nomination and five copies of the book. Entrants may request simultaneous consideration for the Marshall McLuhan Award or the Walter Benjamin Award.

The Dorothy Lee Award for Outstanding Scholarship in the Ecology of Culture is open to books and articles published in 2001 or later that focus on the ethnographic or intercultural analysis of communication, perception, cognition, consciousness, media, technology; material culture, and/or the natural environment. Entry requirements are a letter of nomination or self-
nomination and five copies of the book. Entrants may request simultaneous consideration for the Marshall McLuhan Award or the Walter Benjamin Award.

The Lewis Mumford Award for Outstanding Scholarship in the Ecology of Technics is open to books and articles published in 2001 or later that focus on the history and/or philosophy of technology or science; studies of specific technologies, techniques, or media, and/or their social, cultural, and psychological effects; analysis and criticism of the technological/information society. Entry requirements: Letter of nomination or self-nomination and five copies of the publication. Entrants may request simultaneous consideration for the Marshall McLuhan Award or the Walter Benjamin Award.

The Harold A. Innis Award for Outstanding Thesis or Dissertation in the Field of Media Ecology is open to any Master’s thesis or doctoral dissertation completed for a degree granted in 2001 or later on any topic related to media ecology. Entry requirements are a letter of nomination or self-nomination and five copies of the thesis or dissertation.

The Mary Shelley Award for Outstanding Fictional Work is open to novels, short stories, hypertexts, plays, scripts, comics, audio recordings, motion pictures, videos, and other narrative forms, published or released in 2001 or later, that include media ecology themes, concepts, or insights. Entry requirements are a letter of nomination or self-nomination and five copies of the publication.

The John Culkin Award for Outstanding Praxis in the Field of Media Ecology is open to works of art, media production, professional activity or other practical applications of the media ecology approach. Entry requirements are a letter of nomination or self-nomination and five copies of supporting materials.

The Louis Forsdale Award for Outstanding Educator in the Field of Media Ecology is open to any instructor on any educational level. Entry requirements are a letter of nomination or self-nomination and five copies of supporting materials.

The Jacques Ellul Award for Outstanding Media Ecology Activism is open to any individual engaged in political activism whose work is informed by the media ecology perspective. Entry requirements are a letter of nomination or self-nomination and five copies of supporting materials.

All entries must be sent by December 1, 2003 to: Lance Strate, President, Media Ecology Association, Department of Communication and Media Studies, Fordham University Bronx, NY 10458-9993. More information can be obtained at the MEA Web site at <www.media-ecology.org> or by contacting Lance Strate at: Strate@Fordham.edu or by telephone: +1 718 817 4864.

RSF Publishes Second Annual Report on Cyberspace

The Paris-based free expression organisation, Reporters sans frontières (RSF) last month published its second annual report on cyberspace titled “The Internet under Surveillance: Obstacles to the free flow of information online”.

The report details the attitudes to the Internet by the powerful in 60 countries over a two-year period between Spring 2001 and Spring 2003. The preface to the report is written by Vinton G. Cerf, who is often referred to as the “father” of the Internet.

Cerf said in the preface: “The Internet is one of the most powerful agents of freedom. It exposes truth to those who wish to see and hear it. It is no wonder that some governments and organizations fear the Internet and its ability to make the truth known.”

The report notes that as at mid-June this year, more than 50 Internet users were in prison around the world, three quarters of them in China.

It argues that the Internet is the bane of all dictatorial regimes, although even in democracies such as the United States, Britain and France, new anti-terrorism laws have tightened government control of it and undermined the principle of protecting journalistic sources.
Some of the observations contained in the report include the fact that:

The number of Internet users in China doubles nearly every six months and the number of Chinese websites similarly doubles every year, observing that this “dizzying expansion of cyberspace” is matched by government efforts to control, censor and repress it with harsh laws, jailing cyber-dissidents, blocking access to websites, spying on discussion forums and shutting down cybercafes.

In Vietnam, the Internet is not very widespread but is nevertheless firmly under the control of the ruling Communist Party, which seems to be faithfully copying neighbouring China by arresting cyber-dissidents, barring access to sites deemed politically or culturally “incorrect” and monitoring private e-mail.

Going online in Cuba is very restricted and closely watched by the government. Official permission is required and the necessary equipment, including the most modern, is rationed and can only be bought in special state-run shops, again only with special permission. The government passed laws on the Internet as soon as the Internet came to Cuba.

Decree 209, titled “Access to the World Computer Network from Cuba”, of June 1996 stipulates that it cannot be used “in violation of the moral principles of Cuban society and its laws” and that e-mail messages must not “endanger national security.”

In Tunisia, the government says it favours rapid and democratic growth of the Internet, but in practice, state security police keep it under very tight control. Sites are censored, e-mail intercepted, cybercafes monitored and users arrested and arbitrarily imprisoned. One cyber-dissident, Zouhair Yahyaoui, was arrested in 2002 and jailed for two years.


Festival to Draft Global Youth Radio Manifesto

Specialist international broadcasters and radio journalists will use the Radio Kidocracy 2003 African broadcasting festival to ratify a proposed International Youth Radio Manifesto when they meet in South Africa’s mother city, Cape Town, between September 29 and October 4, 2003.

The deadline for applications is September 1.

The festival, now in its third year, draws together specialist youth and community broadcasters from all over the world, with a special emphasis on Africa and other developing country regions.

The 2003 festival intends developing the idea of participatory youth radio in practical terms through a series of hands-on radio production and recording workshops involving all delegates in active radio-making projects.

In addition, the festival will launch the proposed International Youth Radio Manifesto, which was drafted at the 2002 conference before being workshopped around the world.

Delegates will also debate long-term plans for transforming Radio Kidocracy into a larger annual youth media event, with global links to children’s and youth radio, from Internet radio to the local efforts of grassroots NGOs and including national and international radio broadcasters.

These plans include strategies to include Radio Kidocracy in the planning of the 4th World Summit on Media for Children in Brazil, to ensure a platform for youth radio at the global event.

Radio Kidocracy 2003 is being jointly hosted by South Africa’s leading community radio station, Bush Radio, and the Children’s Radio Education Workshop (Crew). Copies of the draft manifesto are available for comment and debate prior to the festival, to ensure that it truly represents as wide a view as possible.
Those interested in further information, registration forms, or other guidelines should contact festival organizer, Nashira Abrahams, on telephone (+27-21) 448-5450, fax (+27-21) 448-5451 or on email at: nashira@bushradio.co.za

News And Media Law Leaders Endorse Principles For Internet Press Freedom

A conference of leading journalists, media lawyers and online news executives, which met in New York from June 26 to 28, has endorsed the “Statement of Vienna”, a set of 16 principles representing fundamental guidelines for maintaining and protecting the freedom and independence of Internet news, and suggested actions to implement it.

The Statement of Vienna, a body of 16 principles, was adopted in Vienna, Austria, on November 21, last year, as the fundamental guidelines for protecting press freedom on the Internet by members of nine leading global press freedom organizations.

The Statement affirms, among its principles, that “news media in cyberspace and via international satellite broadcasts should be afforded the same freedom of expression rights as traditional news media. . .”

The June conference, titled Press Freedom on the Internet, was co-sponsored by the World Press Freedom Committee (WPFC) and the Communications and Media Law Committee of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York.

Topics examined at the conference include: How Internet news travels, and how and where it is censored and restricted; issues of Internet legal jurisdiction; press freedom concerns related to the upcoming United Nations sponsored World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS); and ways in which the free flow of Internet news content can be protected from censorship, blocking and government restriction.

Tom Curley, President and Chief Executive Officer of The Associated Press, said Internet issues, especially relating to intellectual property rights, are among the greatest concerns for the AP’s worldwide operations.

He said: “In every meeting I go to, there are issues around piracy and threats to our revenue stream.”

Other concerns, according to him, include “considerable threats to getting access to information, what happens to that information and what we are responsible for.”

Curley noted that AP has just designated New York lawyer John Keitt as general counsel with special responsibility for addressing intellectual property and other business development issues.

Representative Christopher Cox, co-sponsor with Representative Tom Lantos of a bill to establish an office of Global Internet Freedom, explained his purpose in introducing the bill, which is expected to reach the floor of the House of Representatives in early July.

Geoffrey Robertson, a noted British human rights lawyer, described the new challenges the Internet poses for publishers, who are now becoming targets for libel suits from all corners of the world based on complaints by plaintiffs that they have been wronged by material appearing on the Internet, even if it originates in another country.

Kim Holmes, the United States Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, declared that the United States will defend press freedom rights at the UN, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), and at the upcoming WSIS.

Others statements were made by experts in news, journalism education, media law and Internet technology. They include Leonard Sussman, senior scholar in international communications at Freedom House; Shanthi Kalathil, author of Global Studies of Internet Freedom, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Xiao Qiang, director of the China
Internet Study Programme at University of California, Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism; Ben Edelman, of the Harvard Law School, who has written extensively about Internet blocking; Guy-Olivier Segond, Special Ambassador to the WSIS; Henrikas Yushkiavitshus, Adviser to UNESCO Director General Koichiro Matsuura; Andres Garcia Lavin, former President of the Inter American Press Association and International Association of Broadcasting; Mogens Schmidt, Assistant Director of Press Freedom and Democracy at UNESCO; and Ronald Koven, European Representative of WPFC.

Others are Adam Clayton Powell III, Visiting Professor at Annenburg School for Communication, USC; Timothy Balding, Director General of the World Association of Newspapers (WAN); Tala Dowlatshahi, U.S. Representative of Reporters Without Borders; Mick Stern, Webmaster for the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ); Jane Kirtley, the Silha Professor of Media Ethics and Law at University of Minnesota School of Journalism and Mass Communication; Paige Anderson, Staff Counsel for Global Internet Policy Initiative (GIPI) at the Center for Democracy and Technology; Roger Parkinson, former president of WAN; Andrew Nachison, Director, The Media Center at the American Press Institute; and Seymour Topping, San Paulo Professor of International Journalism at Columbia University.

Full text of “The Statement of Vienna” is reproduced below.

Press Freedom on the Internet
1. News media in cyberspace and via international satellite broadcasts should be afforded the same freedom of expression rights as traditional news media. Any text adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society should affirm this. A free press means a free people. Press freedom on the Internet must be a fundamental characteristic of this and of any new communication system.
2. This principle is embodied in UNESCO’s Declaration of Sofia of 1997: “The access to and the use of these new media should be afforded the same freedom of expression protections as traditional media.” This declaration, adopted by a broad cross-section of journalists from both East and West Europe, was formally endorsed by the member states of UNESCO at its General Conference in 1997.
3. A major priority must be implementation of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” That pledge, made by the international community in 1948, must be a living reality everywhere.
4. There are many forms of communication over the Internet, and it is important not to confuse them. News, for example, is different from such things as pornography, paedophilia, fraud, conspiracy for terrorism, incitement to violence, hate speech, etc., although there may be news stories about such problems. Such matters as those listed are normally covered in existing national general legislation and can, if appropriate and necessary, be prosecuted on the national level in the country of origin. No new legislation or international treaty is necessary.
5. Some countries that have advocated controls over the free flow of information across national frontiers have tried to justify such controls on political grounds, regional value systems or national information sovereignty. Such controls are clearly in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
6. Over the years, developing countries have complained of being unequal partners in world communication ability. The new information technologies afford just the opportunity for interactive and multi-way communication that these developing world critics have said they want. For those in many countries, Article 19 is still a promise rather than a reality. The new communication technologies could go a very long way toward fulfilling the promise.
7. Those who seek answers to the so-called “digital divide” neglect to recall that previous communication technologies such as printing, radio and television also started in advanced, more developed countries and spread virtually throughout the world, largely thanks to natural market processes. The rate of spread of each successive new communication technology accelerated radically. According to the International Telecommunication Union, it took 38 years for the first 50 million radio sets to be in place worldwide, 13 years for the first 50 million television sets, and just four years for the first 50 million Internet connections. There are now more than 10 times as many Internet connections worldwide.

8. Because general principles are at stake, there is concern that controls instituted for new communication technologies could “wash back” into controls over traditional news media. This would be regressive and tragic. Nothing that could work in this manner should be permitted at this Summit.

9. A number of proposals for regulation and controls now being made were made and rejected during past debate over now-discredited proposals for a “new world information and communication order.” There are clearly those at work who seek to revive and assert for their own purposes such restrictive proposals in the new guise of countering alleged threats and dangers posed by new communication technologies. These proposals must again be successfully resisted, just as they were earlier.

10. Many of the fears over the new communication technologies expressed by officials and politicians seem to reflect anxieties about the new and unfamiliar, which they do not control. Such anxieties often reflect ignorance on what the new communication technologies really are and of how they work. They can also reflect a fear of freedom. Discussions of many alleged problems are often conducted on the basis of unproved assertions and speculations. Rigorously researched, hard data is missing to describe the supposed threats posed by the new communication technologies, with these unproven dangers used to justify the calls for controls.

11. If successful, proposals to control content and its dissemination through new information technologies would severely constrain their rapid spread and development.

12. In the broader freedom of expression context, existing international copyright regimes and intellectual property rights agreements are, generally speaking, an indispensable encouragement to creation and innovation. Those who seek to undermine such existing conventions on the grounds of free access would, in fact, succeed only in drastically reducing incentives for developing and distributing information.

13. Most people in the world continue to receive their news and information through traditional broadcast and print media and are likely to continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

14. The forthcoming World Summit on the Information Society provides both opportunities to broaden the reach of freedom of expression as well as dangers from those who would narrow it — unthinkingly or deliberately.

15. Everyone involved in preparations for that summit in late 2003 in Geneva, and for the follow-up summit in 2005 presently scheduled for Tunis, should bear firmly in mind the need to maximize opportunities for extending press freedom and to resist the threats to restrict it. To that end, civil society and all those engaged in news flows over the Internet must be an integral part of the preparations at every stage. This summit conference cannot be left to governments and technocrats alone.

16. The Coordinating Committee of Press Freedom Organisations calls for concerted effort to make preserving and extending the free flow of news and information in cyberspace a basic concern of the Summit. News on the Internet is the same as news everywhere. New technology does not require any reconsideration of fundamental rights such as freedom of the press.

We call on delegates and others involved in the Summit process to:

a) reject any proposal aimed at restricting news content or media operations,

b) support inclusion of a clear statement of unqualified support for press freedom on the Internet, and
c) include with action on any other subject that could be used restrictively a clear statement that the particular provision involved is not intended to involve any restriction on press freedom. There must be press freedom in cyberspace.

**IFJ Challenges AU Leaders to Set Journalists Free and Abandon Press Controls**

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) last month called on African Union (AU) Heads of State to release all jailed journalists and repeal all anti freedom of expression legislation.

The IFJ was supporting a petition launched on June 5 by CREDO for Freedom of Expression and Associated Rights and Fahamu to be presented at the AU meeting of Heads of State in Maputo in July and addressed to President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, the current Chair of the AU.

The petition to the African leaders contends that the active participation of citizens in shaping policy and decision making of their countries will be impossible if their governments continue to deny them the rights necessary to ensure such participation. Such rights, it said, include the rights to freedom of expression, assembly, association and political participation, as well as media freedom to facilitate a free exchange of information, ideas and opinions.

A similar statement has also come from the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), while dozens of free expression organisations around the world have signed on to the original petition by CREDO and Fahamu.

In the IFJ’s supporting statement, Aidan White, the its General Secretary, said: “In most African countries journalists work under intolerable conditions because of disregard for their professional, social, trade union and basic human rights.”

According to him, “Governments must realise that the promotion of human rights, peace, tolerance and stability, public accountability, access to information and general people’s participation in the decision making process are key challenges for a vibrant and constructive Africa. They are certainly key challenges for the journalists themselves.”

The IFJ said the removal of all legal and political obstacles to the exercise of free and independent journalism in Africa was a fundamental starting point, adding that the AU must play a positive and practical role in the process by promoting freedom of the press throughout the continent.

It urged the AU to endorse the principles set out in the Windhoek Declaration of 1991 and respect of International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions and labour standards.

White said: “The African Union’s pledges for good governance and people’s participation in the political process has never really materialized. On the contrary, the appalling situation of journalists in Eritrea and Zimbabwe, for example, two countries that were among the first signatories to the AU Constitutive Act, do not attract any reaction. Such political double-speak casts a shadow over the prospects for democracy and the future of the AU ambitions”.

The IFJ called on international journalists and their organisations to sign up for the online petition in order to make a strong statement to the AU meeting in July.

The CPJ has also written to the Secretary General of the AU, Mr. Amara Essy, to express “deep concern” over the state of press freedom in Africa.

In the letter signed by its Executive Director, Ann Cooper, the CPJ said it was dismayed that the issue of press freedom did not appear on the conference agenda.

It noted that the “outgoing AU chairperson, South African President Thabo Mbeki, recently stated that a principal responsibility of the organization is ‘to ensure that the entirety of our continent enjoys peace, stability and democracy.’
But the CPJ argued that as long as journalists’ rights are suppressed, and they are not free to report on official injustices, such as corruption and other hindrances to development, the AU will not be able to fulfill its mandate.

It urged the Secretary General to use his authority to ensure that the issue of press freedom in Africa is addressed at this conference, and that it remains on the AU agenda in the future, adding: “We also hope that you will use the occasion of the Maputo summit to encourage AU members to improve conditions for the media in their respective countries.”

The CPJ noted that since it last wrote to the Secretary General in August 2002, AU member governments have done little to improve their treatment of journalists as reporters in several countries are routinely harassed, while media outlets are censored in reprisal for their work.

It said the governments of many African countries continue to use repressive legislation to restrict coverage and imprison journalists and that according to its research, there are currently 30 journalists imprisoned in Africa because of their work.

Saying that it was particularly disturbed by the press freedom records of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Morocco, Togo, and Zimbabwe, the CPJ argued that although “these countries are the most egregious violators of journalists’ rights, the trends of harassment, intimidation, and imprisonment of reporters, as well as legal restrictions and censorship, are common across the continent.”

It said authorities in many African countries continue to deny reporters access to government information, and to use criminal laws to stifle dissent and punish journalists who criticize ruling regimes.

The CPJ noted that according to the AU’s “Constitutive Act,” the union is designed to “promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance” and to “promote sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels.”

It said: “As an organization of journalists dedicated to defending our colleagues worldwide, we believe that a free press is essential to attaining these goals. Journalists play a vital role in ensuring that citizens of African nations are informed about issues of public concern.”

The CPJ urged AU member states must uphold their commitments to the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights, including the right to freedom of expression and allow the media in their countries to operate freely, without fear of reprisal.

It asked the AU to also promote the decriminalization of press offenses in all African countries, saying that by guaranteeing freedom of expression and freedom of the press, the AU can help ensure democracy and stability across the continent.

World Bank’s Young Professionals Programme

Highly qualified and motivated young people who are skilled in areas relevant to the World Bank operations such as economics, finance, education, public health, social sciences, engineering, urban planning and natural resource management can apply to the Young Professionals Programme.

Appointments are from 12 to 18 months, and may result in confirmation as a career Bank staff member. Applicants must be citizens of Bank member countries and be 32 years of age or younger when entering the programme.

Fluency in English and a master’s degree or equivalent are required, along with significant relevant professional experience or continued academic study at the doctoral level.

Applications for the 2004 term are now being accepted.

More information may be obtained from the World Bank’s website at: http://wbln0028.worldbank.org/hrscareers.nsf/key/ypp
ATTACKS ON THE PRESS IN JUNE 2003

Government Agents Mop Up Copies Of TELL Magazine

A new form of censorship that can aptly be referred to as informal repression of the right of freedom of expression and the press was played out in June when government agents suspected to be officials of COJA, the Organising Committee of the All Africa Games, Abuja 2003, went round newsstands on June 23 to mop up copies of TELL magazine, Edition No.26, dated June 30, 2003 for what is suspected to be an unfavourable story to COJA titled “Scandal in Aso Rock; Anti-corruption Campaign, a Fraud.”

Management of TELL magazine, in a statement condemned it saying the action was an “assault on the right of the Nigerians people to be informed” while at the same time giving assurance to its readers that TELL will not succumb to any form of censorship.

The statement signed by its editor, Mr. Ayodele Akinkuotu, disclosed that on Saturday, June 21, officials of COJA, swooped on the Lagos office of TELL just as copies of the said edition were being circulated. These officials, the statement said, assisted by operatives of State Security Service (SSS) bought off most of the copies from agents and vendors. It added that in most parts of the country the officials replicated the same scenario.

TELL management also revealed that: “Prior to the mopping up operation, COJA officials had visited the company headquarters in Ogba, Lagos on Friday, June 20. They made overtures to the magazine’s management to buy the whole edition. Aware of its commitment to free speech and freedom of the press, the management turned down the offer.”

Their wholesale purchase of the ‘offending’ Tell denied readers the opportunity of reading the edition of the magazine.

Police Arrest Journalists

The Nigerian Police on June 30 arrested Mrs. Funmi Komolafe, Labour Editor of Vanguard newspaper and Mr. Ola Awoniyi, a correspondent of Agence France Presse (AFP), the French news agency. The two journalists were arrested at the Federal Government Secretariat, Abuja, where they had gone to cover the anti-fuel price increase protest rally organized by the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC). The journalists were, however, released later the same day. The journalists were arrested at about 9.30 a.m. by 10 armed policemen after they tear-gassed a crowd of demonstrators while also shooting into the air.

According to reports, the policemen had walked up to Mrs. Komolafe after protesters had fled saying that the Assistant Inspector General Ekihametalor wanted to discuss with her. Mrs. Komolafe told them that she had nothing to discuss with the AIG and they left. They however returned threatening, “please come with us or we carry you.” She then obliged accompanied by other journalists including the AFP reporter, Mr. Ola Awoniyi. They were then taken away in a police pick-up van with about 15-20 armed policemen.

The van was driven away with a siren to the FCT Police Command in Garki. The two journalists were taken into the office of the Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Namdel Gomwalk. They were there for about 15 minutes after which they were taken into the office of one Paul Idedia. After consultation with AIG Ekihametalor, the two journalists were released at about 10.10 a.m.

MEDIA / PRESS FREEDOM AWARDS

Call For Entries For Shell Economist Awards

African journalists are eligible for the US$65,000 annual Shell Economist analytical writing awards under the 2003 theme “Do we need nature?” The awards, which boast a US$20 000 first prize, is underwritten by Shell and The Economist.

The deadline for entries is midnight (GMT) on August 22, 2003.
The competition seeks to solicit original essays of no more than 2000 words. The question - “do we need nature?” - is unusual in that it demands the answer “yes”. Applicants are encouraged to consider further points such as “how much?”, “why?” and “when?”

One of the arguments envisioned is that through genetically modified (GM) foods, the use of gene therapy and greater reliance on science and technology, mankind is becoming increasingly less reliant on nature. But to what extent can - and should - science and technology be used? That’s for applicants to decide.

The grand prize winner will receive US$20,000 cash, while the prizes for the second and third place runners-up are US$10,000 and US$5,000 respectively. The ideal length of all entries should be 1,500 words, to a maximum of 2,000 words. All entries must include a synopsis of up to 300 words. Essays must be written in English and be accompanied by a properly completed entry form. All entries must be lodged on the competition website, along with a properly completed entry form.

Queries can also be made on the web site, which can be viewed at: www.shelleconomistprize.com.

African Science And Technology Reporting Awards

Nominations have opened for Africa’s biggest science and technology journalism awards, with a final deadline set for October 1.

The annual Profile Awards, sponsored by global technology group Siemens, is accepting nominations from anywhere in Africa for the first time. The awards previously only recognized work published in the southern African region.

The awards seek to showcase journalism that breaks the mold, and that elevates technology writing above the dull and jargon-ridden “techno-talk” that characterizes so much science reporting on the continent.

Winning entries should demonstrate journalists’ ability to “unbundle” technology in writing that is interesting and easy to understand, and which makes even complex concepts, or the workings and benefits of technological processes, easily understandable to a lay audience.

The awards will also seek to honour reportage that is informed, well researched, balanced and accurate — reflecting both technological research and market context.

Distinctive writing styles, innovative approaches, solid research, analytical ability, and the use of “info-graphics” will also all contribute towards judges’ decisions.

The 10 award categories are for coverage of mobile telecommunications; fixed network telecommunications; information technology, including both hardware and software; medical solutions, ranging from hardware to scientific research; technological solutions for basic industries, such as mining; technological solutions for manufacturing industries; technology in the energy sector; innovative transportation systems (excluding road transport); technology-related corporate citizenship programs; other innovative technology or science services.

The Profile Awards will be presented in 10 categories encompassing print and electronic journalism and radio and television programs. An 11th overall “grand award” for the best piece of science and technology journalism of 2003 will be selected from the winners in the 10 categories.

Prizes include cash and business equipment. The grand prize winner will also receive an all-expenses-paid overseas trip.

The preliminary deadline for nominations and other entries is October 1.

Anyone interested in either nominating a journalist, or entering their own work, should download the relevant form from the awards Web site at www.profileawards.co.za

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WASH Reporting Award

African and other developing world journalists are invited to enter the inaugural WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All campaign) Water Reporting Awards as part of an initiative to highlight the growing importance and scarcity of water in the world.

The awards, organised by the Geneva-based Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, in collaboration with the International Federation of Environmental Journalists (IFEJ), are designed to encourage journalists to investigate issues relating to sanitation, hygiene and water problems in their countries.

The deadline for submissions is November 30, 2003. The winner will receive US$500 plus an all-expenses paid trip to Dakar, Senegal, to attend the first WASH Global Forum meeting in March 2004. There will be four other prizes of US$250 each, including a “Youth Reporter” award.

Journalists can submit a maximum of three entries, each consisting of one or more articles on the same theme published, telecast or broadcast during 2003. All entries should contain clear copies of printed articles, with the title of the journal, city in which it is published and date clearly marked. Similar details should be included for all video or audio tape entries.

Panels of judges will adjudicate the entries in three languages - English, French and Spanish.

All entries should be marked for the attention of Eirah Gorre-Dale and posted to: Water Supply & Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), International Environment House, Chemin des Anemones 9, 1219, Chatelaine, Geneva, Switzerland. Queries can be emailed to Ms Gorre-Dale, or to FEJI chairman Darryl D’Monte.

Thomson Foundation 2004 Broadcast Journalism Course

The Thomson Foundation has announced next year’s summer course in international broadcast journalism, scheduled to hold from June 21 to September 10, 2004 in Cardiff, the capital city of Wales, United Kingdom.

The application deadline is April 30, 2004. Applications will be accepted, beginning September 2003.

The three-month course is open to professionals who want to improve their skills in radio and television reporting and share experiences with colleagues from around the world. It is ideally suited for broadcasters with at least two years’ experience in television or radio. Applicants who have not been successful this year can re-apply for next year’s courses.

With participants from throughout the world, the course will be divided into two groups, television and radio, which will work together at different times during the three months.

The emphasis will be on news and current affairs broadcasting. Participants will study modern techniques and developments, and investigate the problems facing journalists through discussion with British experts and fellow professionals from other countries.

Professionals with solid experience in broadcasting, current affairs and documentary broadcasting, mainly from the BBC and ITV, will lead the course.

Participants will receive practical training in news gathering, working with microphones and cameras, video and sound tape editing and team management. They will also be required to produce a news bulletin or current affairs program under realistic conditions – finding stories, conducting and recording interviews, editing tapes, writing TV scripts and working from agency tapes. They will also have to produce a full program as a final project.

The course will be based at Cardiff University, which has radio and television studios, professional sound and video recording and editing equipment, a computerized broadcasting editorial system, and a journalism library.
All applicants must be over 24 years-old, with a minimum of 18 months of radio or TV experience. They must be fluent in English and nominated by their employers. A selection panel will choose the finalists.

Tuition is £8,000. Assistance may be available to cover fees and air fares. Potential participants or their employers should contact the British Council or the British Embassy or High Commission in their countries for information, as soon as possible. Applicants are advised not to wait to be offered a place before applying for a scholarship.

For application forms or additional information on the course, e-mail the Foundation at enquiries@thomfound.co.uk or visit http://www.thomsonfoundation.co.uk/docs/training/courses/broadcast.htm.

Information Technology Course at Rhodes University

African technology and information policy journalists can sign up for a 10-day practical training course at South Africa’s Rhodes University in preparation for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva later this year.

The hands-on course, sponsored by the Belgian Technical Cooperation Agency, seeks to bring 15 non-South African journalists to Grahamstown to hone their skills and strategies for reporting information technology issues for an African audience.

Journalists resident anywhere in Africa, except South Africa, are eligible for the fellowships.

The training will run immediately prior to Rhodes University’s September 8 to 10 Highway Africa 2003 cyber-journalism conference, and will allow course participants to attend key conference events.

The course, titled “Internet and Journalism: Covering the Information Society,” will explore intellectual arguments and practical skills for appropriate reporting on information society issues for African audiences.

The training is specifically targeted at mid-career journalists with an interest in covering information and communications technologies, telecoms, media policy, education strategies and global trends.

Successful applicants will also qualify to serve in a special African news team that will travel to Geneva to act as a specialist pan-African news agency reporting back to the continent.

Interested journalists with relevant experience should submit their CVs, letters of support from their editor or relevant employer, and a cover letter showing their interest in the topic. The letter should outline how applicants intend using the skills and information acquired during their training.

Finally, applicants should also each submit a short essay about their country’s information society readiness.

Short-listed candidates will be required to undergo an additional “due diligence” process.

All applications should be submitted by e-mail to highwayafrica@ru.ac.za.

Anyone interested in additional information should e-mail fellowship coordinator, Oluseyi Folayan, at o.folayan@ru.ac.za.

Don-Pedro Wins CNN African Journalist of The Year Award Again

Ms. Ibiba Don-Pedro, former The Guardian newspapers reporter and winner of the year 2001 Cable News Network (CNN) African Journalist of the Year Award was again named winner of the 2003 edition of the award.

The President, CNN International, Chris Cramer and the Group Chief Executive Officer of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) Peter Matlare, presented Don Pedro with the award at a gala ceremony hosted by CNN in partnership with the SABC and the award sponsors at the Sandston Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.
Ibiba’s story: “The Travails of the Swamp in Black Landscape” won her the prize having being chosen from entrants from 32 nations across the African content with nine persons emerging finalists.

The chairperson of the Judging Panel, Dr. Doyinsola Abiola, said: “Her entry demonstrated a level of journalistic excellence and integrity which all of us felt deserved the highest recognition. She is an amazing writer, she tells the story in a beautiful poetic way so the reader cannot put it down. Don Pedro’s work, along with that of all the finalists’ demonstrates the sheer strength and quality of journalism throughout Africa. Each and everyone of the finalists should stand proud of their work.”

Crammer said: “These winners represent the best in African journalism,” adding:

“CNN has always been dedicated to encouraging freedom of speech and maintaining journalistic integrity. We are delighted to see this competition continue to nurture such a diverse of talent and stories from an ever increasing number of African nations.”

According to the organizers of the awards, Mandela praised the finalists, saying: “For all of you journalists, working in and on Africa, are performing a social function of immense importance. The well-being of people can be affected by decisions reached on the basis of your reporting.

“You are the mirror in which governments of our continent must see themselves and report fearlessly and honestly. You are the image makers through which the rest of the world judges our continent. Report with understanding and honesty, we plead.”

The overall CNN Journalist of the Year Award prize consists of a trip to CNN Centre, Atlanta, complementary flights courtesy of South African Airlines; along with the prize awarded to all category of winners, which consists of laptop computer, modem and printer in addition to cash prize.

Don Pedro went to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the United States for a nine-month fellowship following her winning of prize in 2001. A 1987 graduate of English Language from the University of Jos, she is currently pursuing a Masters degree in Journalism at the University of Leicester in the United Kingdom.

Some categories of the CNN African Journalists Award include the ThisDay Sponsored MKO Abiola prize for the best African print journalist; the Business Award by MultiChoice Africa Foundation; Tourism Award sponsored by the South African Airways and Television-General News Bulletin Award sponsored by Westcliffe Hotel, Johannesburg; and at least eight others.

"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.”

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