NGOs Ask National Assembly to Enact Freedom Of Information, Whistleblowers Acts

Civil society organisations have called on the National Assembly to urgently pass the Freedom of Information Bill pending before it and enact a Whistleblowers Act to strengthen the legal framework for the fight against corruption.

In joint presentation in Abuja to the Senate Committee on Corrupt Practices and Related Offences at a public hearing on the proposed amendment to the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act, Transparency International Nigeria and the Zero Corruption Coalition, a coalition of non-governmental organisations (NGO) working on corruption issues, noted that the law contained no provision for access to information and was not complemented by any access to information law.

Making the presentation on behalf of the organisations, Mr. Edetaen Ojo, the Executive Director of Media Rights Agenda (MRA), which is a member of the Zero Corruption Coalition, told the Senate Committee: “A law which gives members of the public a right of access to records and information held by government departments and agencies, with recognised exemptions...
is critical to the success of any anti-corruption drive. Without such openness and transparency in government processes, the fight against corruption will be an even more difficult one.”

The organisations also observed that the provisions of the Act on the protection of whistle blowers were not strong enough to create an incentive for people who have information which can be of assistance to the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) to voluntarily come forward with such information.

They argued that the provisions needed to be strengthened to provide greater protection for whistle blowers.

The organisations therefore recommended that that there was an urgent need to pass the Freedom of Information Bill currently before the National Assembly, and the Whistleblowers Bill which will be presented soon to it, arguing that “these two legislation will enrich the legal framework that the ICPC will work with.”

They also contended that with the enactment of these two laws, members of the public will be encouraged to support the activities of the Commission in diverse ways.

In a separate presentation to the Senate Committee, the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) similarly called on the National Assembly to enact the Freedom of Information Bill into law and pass a Whistleblowers Act.

Making the presentation, the CDD’s Programme Coordinator, Mr. Otive Igbuzor, said the elaborate provisions on the Code of Conduct Bureau, in the 1979 and 1999 Constitutions, typified the contradictions in independent institutions of accountability.

The CDD noted that the provisions empower the Bureau to demand that public officials, elected or appointed, declare their assets, while the Bureau has the responsibility of ascertaining the veracity of the claims made in these declarations.

It argued that it was an irony that assets declared could not be made public unless the declarant chose to voluntarily make his or her declaration public, thus limiting the opportunity to expose known cases of corruption.

According to the CDD, “an attempt by a civil society organisation, the Media Rights Agenda, to challenge the secrecy surrounding asset declaration and promote freedom of information, was dismissed by a High Court judge in a Judiciary that is itself riven by corruption and lack of independence.”

It noted that the ICPC has also suffered a credibility problem due to the lack of transparency in the unstructured manner in which it interacts with the general public, which is why it has received negative publicity in the press in recent times.

The CDD said: “Given the focus on accountability and justification for governmental actions, most watchers of the ICPC and such bodies believe that constant engagement with the public is key. Publicity must not only apply to power holders but also to agents of accountability. In a situation where they lack the capacity or the desire to publicise their work with the public, they expose themselves to the same accusations of self-importance and arrogance that often get government into trouble with the citizens.”

It argued that for an institution like the ICPC to make an impact beyond its appearance in a legal document, it must follow some principles that are central to its position as an oversight agency responsible for the accountability of elected authorities. An essential part of these principles, it said, is that information about its work must be widely available, both within government and to the public.

Saying that publicity is key to engendering a culture of accountability, the organisation said: “This is why the National Assembly must as a matter or urgency pass the Freedom of Information Act and enact a Whistleblowers Act to protect people who reveal corrupt practices.”

Responding, the Vice Chairman of the Senate Committee on Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences, Senator Tokunbo Afikuyomi, admitted that a Freedom of Information of Act was crucial to the success of the fight against corruption.
He said: “without the existence of a Freedom of Information Act, without a law which gives access to public information, we cannot make progress in this country.”

The Freedom of Information Bill was presented to the National Assembly in July 1999, but has not been passed by either the House of Representatives or the Senate. This is despite the fact that at a public hearing organized by the House of Representatives Committee on Information in October 2001, Nigerians from diverse sectors of the society, expressed massive support for the Bill and its enactment into law.

The Bill being sponsored in the House of Representatives by Dr. Jerry Sonny Ugokwe representing Idemili North/South Federal Constituency of Anambra State, and scores of other members of the House, is made up of eight basic principles. These include:

* Maximum disclosure: This encapsulates the basic rationale underlying the very concept of freedom of information. It establishes a presumption that all information held by public bodies should be subject to disclosure and that this presumption may be overcome only in very limited circumstances.
* Obligation to publish: This establishes that apart from acceding to requests to public held information, public bodies are obliged to publish and disseminate widely, documents of significant public interest, subject only to reasonable limits based on resources and capacity.
* Promotion of open government: Following from the obligation to publish and disseminate information of public interest, the bill seeks to provide for public education by government agencies regarding the scope of information which is available and the manner in which such rights may be exercised.
* Scope of exemptions: In the events that a request for information from public bodies is denied, such refusal to disclose information must be justified by passing the three-part-test. These are that:
  - the information must relate to a legitimate aim listed in the law;
  - disclosure must threaten to cause substantial harm to that aim; and
  - the harm to the aim must be greater than the public interest in having the information.
* Process to facilitate access: The bill outlines the process of a rapid and fair access to information being sought at two levels: within the public body; and appeals to the court.
* Costs: The bill outlines the costing process of gaining access to information to ensure that it is not so high as to deter potential applicants, given that the whole rationale behind freedom of information laws is to promote open access to information.
* Disclosure takes precedence: The bill outlines the extent that a law shall conflict with the principle of maximum disclosure to merit being set aside.
* Protection for whistle-blowers: Not withstanding provisions in the criminal and penal code, and the Official Secret Act, individuals should be protected from any legal, administrative or employment related sanctions for releasing information on wrong-doings; commission of a criminal offence, negation of legal obligation, miscarriage of justice, corruption or dishonesty or serious maladministration regarding a public officer or body.

In drafting the final Bill, Media Rights Agenda had relied on the outcome of a Media Law Reform Workshop jointly organised by it, ARTICLE 19, and the National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria at Ota in Ogun State, from March 16 to 18, 1999. The workshop was attended by 61 representatives of the media, (both independent and state controlled), regulatory bodies, the legal profession, international institutions; local and international non-governmental organizations and other interest groups.

“The Ota Platform of Action on Media Law Reform in Nigeria,” a consensus document, which emerged at the end of that workshop, also recommended that a Freedom of Information legislation should be enacted at the earliest possible opportunity, reflecting the principle of maximum disclosure.
In Nigeria, a veil secrecy surrounds publicly held information. Even the most mundane of information suffers from this tendency. Apart from a plethora of administrative bottlenecks meant to achieve denial of access to public information, governments, including those that make pretensions about being democratic in orientation, routinely erect legal huddles.

**Group Moves To Put Nigeria On Agenda Of UN Commission On Human Rights**

Four years after it emerged from the status of a pariah State, moves are on to again put Nigeria’s human rights record on world stage following allegations of widespread human rights violations since the restoration of democratic rule.

The World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) has called for an investigation into the human rights situation in Nigeria, particularly cases of extra-judicial executions, and also asking the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, which begins meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, this month to discuss the issue.

In a request to the Commission to discuss issue at the meeting under Agenda Item 9, the OMCT has urged the Commission to mandate the UN Special Rapporteur on Summary, Arbitrary and Extra-Judicial Executions, the Special Rapporteur on Torture, the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, the Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, and the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing to undertake a joint investigation of violence, extra-judicial executions and related violations in Nigeria.

It has also asked the Commission to prevail on the Nigerian government to accede to such an investigation being conducted.

In its statement to the Commission, which it proposes to present formally at the six-week meeting, the OMCT noted that “after one of the fiercest dictatorships of its history, Nigeria witnessed the re-establishment of democracy on 29 May 1999 leading to great expectations among the population for the country’s future.”

It recalled that in his inaugural speech, President Olusegun Obasanjo promised that his government would not do “business as usual” and pledged to step on the toes of those responsible for human rights violations.

The OMCT noted that President Obasanjo followed up on his pledge by freeing known political detainees, launching the trials of scores of people for their roles in high profile cases of human rights abuses under the military dictatorship and establishing the Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission to look into human rights violations committed by all previous military regimes in Nigeria.

It said although these actions were applauded in and outside Nigeria and were expected to return the country to international respectability and adherence to rule of law and due process, the last three years of an elected civilian government have witnessed an alarming spate of violence and gross human rights violations.

According to the OMCT, “Since 29 May 1999, when the present government was elected, over 50 separate outbreaks of ethno-religious violence had taken place in Nigeria, involving well-established cases of systematic extra-judicial executions and sundry violations of the integrity of the human person. These have result in the death of over 10,000 persons, the displacement of hundreds of thousands more, the reported rape of thousands of women and other associated violations.”

It alleged that in all these cases Nigeria has repeatedly and consistently failed to abide by its obligations under the international and regional instruments to which it has voluntarily subscribed and, more importantly, failed to comply with its own domestic laws.

It argued that the primacy of the law is a fundamental principle of any democratic system seeking to foster and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms and that this entails,
among other things, an independent judiciary, a legal system guaranteeing equality before the law and the means of recourse enabling individual citizens to defend their rights.

The OMCT contended that “the failure to investigate these killings and associated violations and to bring the perpetrators to account and provide adequate remedies for the victims, has bred a culture and cycle of impunity and resulting resentment, which fuels the increasing viciousness of successive outbreaks of crises and risks plunging Nigeria into a situation of generalized insecurity and lawlessness.”

It said the situation in which many Nigerians now find themselves, presents a reversal of hope from the high expectations and promises that heralded the inauguration of the elected government of President Obasanjo.

The OMCT also noted that as the nation prepares for the 2003 general elections, concerns for the safety and security of the population have increased.

It said: “Given the experience of Nigeria’s electoral history, the elections in 2003 also pose a heightened threat of outbreaks of inter-communal and religious violence as different political groups jostle for electoral advantage.”

The OMCT said in the light of the human rights situation in Nigeria, it was urging the Commission on Human Rights to request the UN Special Rapporteurs on Summary, Arbitrary and Extra-Judicial Executions; Torture; Violence Against Women; Independence of Judges and Lawyers; and on Adequate Housing to undertake a joint investigation of violence, extra-judicial executions and related violations in Nigeria and to request the Nigerian government to accede to such an investigation being conducted.

Officials of the Nigerian Customs Service had in October 2002 seized a shipment of copies of a human rights report titled “Hope Betrayed? A report on Impunity and State-Sponsored Violence in Nigeria,” jointly written by Centre for Law Enforcement and Education (CLEEN) and OMCT.

The book details various ethnic violence including those sponsored by the Nigerian authorities which claimed thousands of lives and led to destruction of property worth millions of Naira in Nigeria during the first three years of President Obasanjo’s reign.

The Nigerian Custom Services seized copies of the books on the excuse that its has “political undertones.”

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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The Global Internet Policy Initiative (GIPI) is a worldwide effort to encourage the implementation of policies that will maximize the Internet’s contribution to national economic development and democratization. It is a joint project of the Internews Network (www.internews.org) and the Center for Democracy & Technology (www.cdt.org).

**CONTRACT PERIOD:** one year, starting in the second quarter of 2003. Upon successful completion of the first year, the contract may be renewed for additional years.

**SALARY:** to be negotiated.

**JOB DESCRIPTION:** GIPI seeks a Policy Advocate based in Lagos to work under the guidance of the Project Manager in Prague, the Chief Lawyer in Washington, DC and in close cooperation with the Media Rights Agenda in Lagos – as well as with local stakeholders, the national Government, and international organizations active in Nigeria and Africa, to develop policies that will help make the Internet available to as many people as possible. The Policy Advocate will:

- Work with other interested parties to identify the most pressing problems in Internet development;
- Work with the Government to encourage the adoption of laws promoting the Internet as a medium of free expression, honest trade and democratic values;
- Work with Regulators to maximize the Internet’s growth, accessibility and benefit to users;
- Communicate regularly with other organizations to share information about pending issues of Internet regulation and GIPI’s activities in Nigeria.

The successful candidate should have at least two of the following attributes:
• A legal background—ideally, a law degree—which will help in analyzing the complex legal issues that surround the Internet, such as privacy rights, telecom competition, ISP licensing, e-commerce, copyright, etc.
• A background of activism—ideally, experience as a lobbyist, involvement in parliamentary politics, or work as a policy advocate for another NGO—as well as skill in building effective coalitions of organizations and people in business, academia, civil society, government and the international community;
• A technical background—ideally, experience working at an Internet Service Provider (ISP)—to understand how the Internet functions and what factors affect its spread and use.

The GIPI Policy Advocate will be expected to achieve results and be dedicated to the ideals of the project, not just to the position as a job. He or she must have good writing and research skills in English. The Advocate will be expected to communicate regularly via email with GIPI’s management and staff in other countries, using the notebook computer that will be provided. He or she should also be prepared to engage in some domestic and international travel.

To apply, send a cover letter and CV to Edetaen Ojo (email: edet@mediarightsagenda.org). Interviews with qualified applicants will be conducted in Lagos in April and May 2003.

**Senate Holds Public Hearing On NBC Bill**

The need to provide independent and diverse editorial views in government-owned broadcast stations, the need to ensure that all sector of the society have equitable access to them and that they offer a level playing field to political parties and candidates may have prompted the Senate Committee on Information last month to organise a public hearing on the National Broadcasting Commission Bill in Abuja.

The Bill, which will replace the National Broadcasting Commission Decree No. 38 of 1992 and its amendment, seeks to resolve a wide range of issues in the operation of the broadcasting regulatory body for it to be able to provide a regulatory environment to facilitate the development of the broadcasting industry in Nigeria.

The Senate Information Committee Chairman, Senator Jonathan Zwingina, expressed optimism at the public hearing that the bill, which had gone through the second reading, would encourage the providers of commercial and community broadcasting services to be responsive to the need for a fair and accurate coverage of matters of public interest.

Several members of the National Assembly who spoke at the hearing were unanimous in their anger and bitterness against government-owned media establishments which they accused of partiality and bias in favour of the Executive to the detriment of the other arms of government, particularly the Legislature.

Declaring the hearing open, Senate President, Anyim Pius Anyim remarked that the Senate had previously complained about the one-sidedness of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) in their treatment of news concerning the Senate.

Senator Zwingina linked Executive’s hold on the broadcast media to the long years of military dictatorship in the country, saying that the executive had appropriated the media to itself to the detriment of other arms of the government and people in other political parties, other than the one the executive belongs to.

He said the proposed NBC law would make adequate provision for the funding and control, as well as the method of appointing the chief executives to the government-owned media houses.
The Director-General of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), Mr. Eddie Iroh, raised the issue of independent funding of the publicly owned broadcast media and the need to democratize appointments of their chief executives.

According to him, it is clear that every thing was wrong with the structures and modus operandi of the federal media, including their names.

He noted that the names of both the Nigerian Television Authority and Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria sounded like private companies manufacturing certain television and radio equipment.

Dr. Silas Babajiya Yisa, the Director General of the NBC, examined the state broadcast stations which he accused of taking instructions only from governors and operating as if there were no laws guiding them. He admitted that the Commission was constantly confused by the attitude of state-owned broadcasting media which would rather take directives from the governors than from the Commission. He added that this largely explains why state radio and television stations are operating as if there is no law guiding them.

He drew attention to the recalcitrant posture of such broadcasting stations over political broadcasting despite repeated warnings from the NBC. He said various aspirants to different political offices across the country have made series of reports about how the incumbents are manipulating the media houses to deny them and their political activities coverage.

Dr. Yisa stressed that state-owned stations are funded by taxpayers’ money and the true ownership of these stations belongs to the people through whose taxes they are sustained, adding: “This is the more reason why the facility should be made available to all and sundry.”

He therefore urged the Senate to speed up the passage of the bill to provide a level playing field for all Nigerians who are rightly the owners of the media, while also helping to resolve the general misconception that the Commission was not a regulatory body but a government agency like NTA, FRCN and the Voice of Nigeria (VON).

Senator Udoma Udo Udoma drew the attention of his colleagues to the implications of bringing chief executives of state-owned media to express their views at the public hearing, and appealed that measures should be taken to protect them from the anger of their state governors. His views were shared by Senators Joseph Waku, Zwingina and Honourable Farouk Lawan.

In support of the views expressed by Senators Udoma, Waku and Zwingina as well as Honourable Lawan, Dr. Yisa called for measures that would ensure that chief executives of state-owned broadcast stations are protected against victimization by the state governors for adhering to professional standards.

Dr. Raymond Dokpesi, Chairman of Daar Communications Limited, owners of the Ray Power radio stations and the Africa Independent Television (AIT), drew attention to the fact that most of the funding of public broadcasters were being provided by the executives at both state and federal levels and as such the executives would of necessity want to control what would go into them for public consumption “and won’t tolerate their perceived opponents getting access to the stations.”

He also declared that government’s claim that it was not allowing private operators to network because of security implication was a ruse. He said if anything, networking by private operators would provide a neutralizing platform for those who threaten the security of the nation. He also argued the fear raised by the director general of the FRCN, Dr. Iroh, that potential coup plotters would use the advantage of networking to achieve success in taking over government was misplaced.

Dr. Dokpesi argued that networking by private radio and television stations would create avenues for “counter-coupists” to neutralize coup plotters and render attempts at forcibly taking over government ineffective.

He expressed concern over the exorbitant broadcast license fees which range from N450,000 (about $3,571.4) and N12 million (about $95,238) depending on whether it is for
radio, television, satellite retransmission or global satellite television, as well as the category of the license, which is determined by its location.

The NBC license fees are categorized into three divisions. These are category 1 for private media outfits operating in key urban locations; category 2 to those operating in semi-urban centers; while category 3 applies to those operating in rural areas.

Dr. Dokpesi also criticized the 2.5 percent charged television and radio operators by the NBC, arguing that in the United States, license fee was less than $1,000 whereas “here, the NBC is working us dry. NBC should be giving subvention and not to depend on us.”

Senator Zwingina expressed confidence that when the bill becomes law, efficiency, good planning, co-ordination, allocation, assignment, registration, monitoring and use of the national broadcasting frequency spectrum would have been imbibed as a culture.

He stressed that the bill will safeguard national interests, safety and security in the use of broadcast frequency spectrum.

Senator Zwingina warned that should President Olusegun Obasanjo refuse to assent to the Bill after it is passed by the National Assembly the Senators would over-ride his veto and make the Act operational before the electioneering campaigns proper.

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**Report On Women’s Freedom Of Expression And The Theatre in Africa**

ARTICLE 19, the Global Campaign on Free Expression, has published a new report on “Women’s Voices and African Theatre”, based on case studies from Kenya, Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe.

According to Celestine Nkulu, Africa Project Officer, who undertook field visits in the four countries, ‘the report explores the significance of theatre as a means to ensure and promote freedom of expression for women.

ARTICLE 19 noted that theatre in most of Africa has for centuries been an important social phenomenon, playing a central role in religion, ritual and social practices, as an art form and as a vehicle for passing on information and traditions, as well as for expressing ideas.

According to the organisation, in recent years, theatre has started to play a role in development and as a means of political expression as women and women’s groups have also started to make use of this powerful expressive medium to promote equality in the home and in society, as well as to educate and advocate around their issues.

The report explores the significance of theatre as a means to freedom of expression for women in the four African countries and provides an historical overview of the development of theatre in those countries, as well as of the contemporary theatre scene.

It also focuses specifically on how, and whether, women are able to access this form of communication, and the reasons it is particularly important to women in Africa.

The report provides recommendations for reform both generally in relation to theatre and more particularly for enhancing access by women to this important medium for social change.

The English version of the report can be found on ARTICLE 19’s website at: http://www.article19.org/docimages/1544.PDF

Further information may also be obtained from John Barker, Africa Programme Director for ARTICLE 19. Telephone: +27 11 403 1488, e-mail: johnb@article19.org.za or from Célestine Nkulu, Africa Project Officer, e-mail: celestine@article19.org.za

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**Conference On Digital Opportunities For Africa Holds In June**

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in collaboration with AMARC Africa will hold a pan-African symposium on Community Multimedia Centres (CMC) in Dakar, Senegal, from June 12 to 17.
The aim of this meeting is to find out more about how community radio stations across Africa are using ICTs to forge a strategy for larger-scale CMC development in Africa.

The first part of the meeting, which will be a workshop, will take place from June 12 to 15, and will bring together representatives of a selection of community radio stations that are successfully offering some form of public access to ICTs or planning to do so as well as ICT-based projects such as community telecentres planning to start community radio as part of their operations.

The purpose of the workshop include: to exchange experiences and compare models, approaches and contexts; to identify needs and recommend measures to meet these needs for successful project implementation; and to make recommendations for a coherent programmatic approach to CMC development in Africa that can serve as a rallying point for all partners and stakeholders including donors.

The second part of the meeting, which will take place on June 16 and 17, will bring together international partners including national development agencies and international governmental and non-governmental organizations in a roundtable on CMC project support in Africa.

The roundtable will examine models of best practice and determine partnership strategies for programme development that ensures full community appropriation of NICTs, sustainability, networking and technical support systems.

IFJ, NGOs Accuse Govts of Excluding Civil Society From WSIS Debates

Civil society representatives have accused government delegates to the second preparatory conference (Prepcom2) of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) which took place in Geneva, Switzerland, from February 17 to 28 of excluding public voices from the debates.

Although 390 civil society organisations were participating in Prepcom2, government delegations voted to exclude them from the discussions during debates on a draft declaration and action plan which representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) said were the most important sessions.

Scheduled to take place in Geneva in December 2003, with a follow-up summit in Tunisia in 2005, the United Nations-sponsored WSIS is expected to launch a final declaration and action plan. The summit is supposed to agree on a set of policies for extending the benefits of information technologies worldwide and bridging the “digital divide” between rich countries and poor ones in the developing world.

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) said government delegations at Prepcom2 “stifled voices of dissent” by excluding civil-society groups from sessions where a draft declaration and action plan were discussed and negotiated.

Accusing the planners of discussing behind closed doors an agenda that could affect “generations to come,” IFJ said the move raises fears that “all the talk about inclusion [in the Information Society] was little more than window dressing.”

Aidan White, General Secretary of the IFJ said: “This decision makes a mockery of the principles of democracy, inclusion and open government on which policy for the information society should be framed. People are rightly shocked that a conference which plans to shape information policy for generations to come will have its agenda decided behind closed doors.”

He added: “There is a long way to go before policies are finalised, but if governments are going to shut out public opinions from the outset it will be a flawed and damaged exercises which will undermine confidence in the future of the information society.”

Similarly, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) also objected to the process, saying “the strict rules of procedure adopted by the governments’
representatives hampered the ability of civil-society representatives to contribute in a meaningful way to the discussions.”

The IFLA said the draft declaration and action plan gives little regard to the role of libraries in the information society and in efforts to bridge the digital divide.

The IFLA was represented at the preparatory meeting by a delegation consisting of its current president, Christine Deschamps; the in-coming president, Kay Raseroka; its Governing Board members, Alex Byrne and Ellen Tise; the IFLA/FAIFE Director, Susanne Seidelin; its Professional Co-ordinator, Sjoerd Koopman; and Secretary General, Ross Shimmon. They were joined by a team of Swiss librarians, led by Daisy McAdam and Danielle Mincio.

Secretary General Shimmon said despite much preparatory work beforehand, libraries feature in only a minor way in the current drafts of the proposed Declaration and Action Plan to be considered at the Summit in December.

The IFLA is asking its members worldwide to contact their governments, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) national commissions and appropriate NGOs to ensure that they are well informed about the potential role of libraries in the information society and in efforts to bridge the digital divide.

It argued that it was important for governments to brief their national representatives to the Summit and the next Preparatory Committee on the ability of libraries to contribute to the development of an equitable global information society.

Members of the Global Unions have also accused the government planners of the Prepcom2 of “stifling voices of dissent” for excluding the civil society from the debate over the draft conclusions.

In a statement, the Global Unions argued that stifling voices of dissent was no answer to the challenge of open and honest discussion about communications policy.

It noted that the summit is supposed to be a tripartite process bringing together voices from the community, from the business world and from government, but regretted that “now politicians have decided to go it alone, raising the fear that all the talk about inclusion was little more than window dressing.”

Global Unions said it was joining widespread protests over the exclusion of civil society from the drafting process at the conference in Geneva, which is the second of three planned preparatory meetings to set the agenda before the summit opens in Geneva on December 10 this year.

The summit, which is being organised by a range of UN agencies led by the International Telecommunications Union, will consider world-wide policy and regulatory issues arising from the introduction of new communications technologies, use of the Internet and the expansion of the global information market. A follow up conference is to be held in Tunis in 2005.

**Freedom of Expression is Central to the Right to Communicate, Says ARTICLE 19**

In a continuing effort to define the elements of the right to communicate, ARTICLE 19, the Global Campaign for Free Expression, in London has said that it must be understood as “the right of every individual or community to have its stories and views heard”.

In a statement issued in London, ARTICLE 19 argued that the right to communicate should not be conceived of as a new and independent right. Instead, it said, any Declaration on the Right to Communicate should firmly establish it within the framework of existing rights, most importantly the right to freedom of expression.

According to ARTICLE 19, the right to communicate should be seen as an umbrella or framework term, encompassing within it a group of related rights including:

- the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas;
- the right to pluralism within the media and to equitable access to the means of communication;
- the right to practice and express one’s culture;
- the right to participate in public decision-making processes;
- the right to access information from public bodies; and
- supporting rights including the right to communicate anonymously and the
  right to respect for private life.

ARTICLE 19 said if it was understood in this way, a Declaration on the Right to Communicate would make a significant contribution to the ongoing process of implementation of the International Bill of Rights.

In February this year, ARTICLE 19 criticised a draft Declaration on the Right to Communicate, circulated by Professor Cees Hamelink in December 2002, purportedly on behalf of State Governments, inter-governmental organisations, the United Nations, representatives of the private sector, non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations, and proposed for adoption at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) scheduled to take place in Geneva, Switzerland, in December this year.

ARTICLE 19 argued that the draft Declaration contained serious flaws as it attempts to impose a number of vague, broad restrictions on the right to freedom of expression, contrary to international law while failing to elaborate clearly the implications of the right to communicate and what States need to do to respect this right.

It therefore urged other NGOs not to endorse the Declaration, which it said undermines rather than promote the further realisation of human rights.

Nigeria to Host Conference of African Council for Communication Education

The 13th biennial Conference of the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), will take place in Nigeria from August 10 to 15, 2003.

The council has therefore called for abstracts of papers to be presented at the conference from interested participants.

Abstracts and copies of papers may be sent to the chairperson of its relevant divisions. They are: Arnold DeBeer (asdebeer@lantic.net) for the Media and Society Division; Andrew Moemeka (Moemeka@ccsu.edu) or Dan Odallo (dodallo@un.org.za), for the Communication and Development Division; Onuora Nwuneli (Nwuneli@yahoo.co.uk) for the Communication Policy and Planning Division; Charles Okigbo (Charles.Okigbo@ndsu.nodak.edu), for the Communication Theory and Research Division.

Others are: Polly McLean (Mcleanp@spot.Colorado.edu), for the Communication and Information Technology Division; Cecil Blake (cblake@unserve.unl.edu for CECILBLAKE@aol.com) for the Languages, Rhetoric and Culture Division; and Professor Kwame Karikari, through Audrey Gadzekpo (gadzekpoaudrey@hotmail.com), for the Professional Training and Development Division.

UK Lawyers Assist Commonwealth Journalists

In a new initiative, several leading UK media and human rights lawyers have joined with the Commonwealth Press Union (CPU) to provide pro bono legal assistance to less privileged journalists and newspapers in the developing Commonwealth, beginning March 2003.

Drawing from both barristers’ chambers and solicitors’ partnerships, the newly launched Commonwealth Legal Support Programme aims to assist Commonwealth journalists in pre- and post-publication law, libel, defamation, human rights and criminal cases.
The programme was developed by Harvey Kass, Legal Director of Associated Newspapers Ltd, Mary Russell, Group Legal Adviser of Associated Newspapers Ltd, Vyvyan Harmsworth, Corporate Affairs Director of Daily Mail and General Trust, and Lindsay Ross, Executive Director of the CPU.

“This is something I have dreamt of for many years. During my time as press freedom director of the CPU, I was very conscious of the lack of credible legal advice to journalists and publishers, particularly in the developing Commonwealth,” says Ms Ross.

The participating lawyers, who were first approached by the CPU last December, have pledged their support and have agreed to take up cases facing CPU member newspapers.

Desmond Browne, QC, spoke on behalf of the lawyers: “I and my colleagues are delighted to provide any help we can to ensure press freedom never goes undefended. We hope our experience with freedom of expression cases under the European Convention and the Human Rights Act can assist journalists and editors in every part of the Commonwealth,” Mr Browne said.

Journalists and newspapers with specific cases who are in CPU membership should contact the CPU secretariat for advice.


Globalvision News Network is helping 2001 Nobel Prize winner for economics, Joseph Stiglitz, launch a global journalism training programme aimed at helping reporters who work in developing countries and countries in transition, like those in Africa.

The programme is aimed at media practitioners who cover finance and economics.

Stiglitz’s Initiative for Policy Dialogue (IPD) website at www.journalismtraining.net is the first of its kind and includes tips on covering subjects such as banking crises, privatisation, foreign exchange crises, central banks, debt forgiveness programmes and capital markets in developing countries.

The IPD programme also provides case studies on different countries so reporters can find out what has happened around the world.

The pieces are written by experienced journalists who write for publications such as Financial Times, New York Times, Reuters, Dow Jones, Fortune and a host of publications from around the world, including publications in Argentina, Nigeria, Norway, Serbia, Vietnam and the United Kingdom.

The journalism training programme is funded by the Ford Foundation and the Open Society Institute and is based at Columbia University in New York City.

IPD will be adding more material in the coming months and plans to translate the site into several languages, including Russian, Vietnamese and Portuguese.

Submissions, ideas, links, comments, photos can be sent to Anya Schiffrin on fax (+251-1) 51-0512 or via email on journalismtraining@hotmail.com

New Publications On Media Management In Emerging Democracies

The International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) has published three new manuals on media management in emerging democracies. The three-volume set is called “The Business of News: Running successful newspapers in emerging free markets” and discusses advertising, market research and newspaper management.

The first manual, “Successful Newspaper Advertising: Building financial independence through ad revenue”, is written by Chris Braithwaite and demonstrates how advertising can provide independence from economic and political forces that often vie to control the media.
The second one, “Personnel and Profits: A guide to successful newspaper management” by Lewis Wolman, discusses how to run the business side of a newspaper, from accounting to distribution and circulation, to managing the newsroom and editorial staff.

In the third one, “Know Your Audience: Increasing Readership and Advertising Through Market Research”, Carrol Dadisman offers sample questionnaires, tips for conducting focus groups and cost-saving alternatives to hiring market research consultants.

If purchased separately, the publications cost US$8.50 each (roughly N1,020). The set of three costs US$20 (roughly N2,400).

The books can be ordered online at the ICJF’s web site: www.icfj.org - AENS

Nigerian Television Authority Gets on Satellite

The Government-owned television, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) has taken its signals to the global community, broadcasting to the world on satellite. For the next six month, NTA signals would be available to M-Net subscribers in West Africa; thereafter for another six month it would expand to cover all of Africa. It has thus joined two other privately owned Nigerian television stations Minaj Broadcasting International (MBI) and Africa Independent Television (AIT) as the third Nigerian station to beam their signals on satellite.

NTA on January 27 signed an agreement with M-Net’s representatives in Nigeria, MultiChoice Nigeria Limited to transmit its signals on the KU band. In attendance at the signing ceremony were notable media stakeholders as Ben Murray-Bruce, the Director General of the NTA; Prof. Jerry Gana, Minister of Information and National Orientation; Senator Jonathan Zwingina, Senate Committee Chairman on Information and his House counterpart, Hon. Farouk Lawan; Senator Mike Ajebo, chairman of MBI; Adewummi Ogunsanya, Chairman of MultiChoice; and Dr. Ronke Ogunmakin, Deputy Director, Planning and Research of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). Others present were Willem Hattingh, GM, MultiChoice Nigeria Limited; Ian Tenant, CEO MultiChoice Africa and Sub-Sahara; Peter Igho, and Akinloye Oyebanji etc.

In his enthusiasm at the event, the Mr. Murray-Bruce, DG of NTA said: “today marks an epoch in the life of NTA. For us at NTA, this is an epoch-making event.” He said further that the advent of NTA on satellite “means that the eye of Nigeria is now focused on the world. We have been the eye of the country, but going on satellite will not only accord us the opportunity to present a good image of Nigeria to the world, but allow the world to see the positive side of the country through us.”

Mr. Bruce recalled that road to the occasion was long and tedious because there were series of meetings and NTA was careful and mindful of what going on satellite portends adding NTA does not want to jump out of the M-Net bouquet as soon as it got in. He said the new development emphasized more training and retraining of the NTA staff to make them hold their own anywhere in the world in broadcasting matters.

Hon Lawan agreed that the wait for NTA to get on satellite was worth the it though he had wondered why NTA had not gone satellite given its wealth of experience and the enormous resources at its disposal over the years. He said he used to ask himself: “if AIT and Minaj can be on the satellite, then what is NTA doing?” Lawan also noted that “what we are doing today will endear Nigerians, Africans and people the world over to NTA.” However to him, the signing event was just the beginning of the race, “the challenge for both NTA and MultiChoice is to harness the gains of this opportunity fully. More importantly, I think NTA should profitably explore the potentials of this pact.”

Senator Zwingina agreeing with Hon. Lawan pointed out: “going satellite means going into tough continuous competition at the international level; it means challenges in the areas of programming, quality control and good cultural mix that will be positively representative of Nigeria.” He therefore called on NTA to wake up to the challenge of globalisation as it goes
digital promising the Senate would make sure NTA is well funded so it does not complain. He praised M-Net for having “done a lot to the development of the broadcast industry in the country while charging NTA, as the eye of the nation, to always represent the nation well before the world. He commended MultiChoice for waiving charges for linking NTA to digital satellite television network declaring that the new deal would build a culture of partnership, competence and objective broadcasting in Nigeria, Africa and beyond.

Prof. Gana described the event as historic saying it will make the organisations the flagship of broadcasting industry in the world adding that his ministry had been working tirelessly to rapidly bridge the digital divide in Nigeria. He disclosed the Federal Government had upgraded the infrastructural facilities of federal government owned broadcast stations and promising that the multiple network stations of the NTA would soon be completed across the nation.

He also said the getting on satellite comes with three challenges for NTA. These are Quality Control, Sustainability of its programmes, and Training and Re-training of manpower.

For quality control, he advised that NTA must improve on the quality of its programmes and make them “excellent, meaningful, and above board and international standard.” For sustainability, he said it required that NTA be prepared and alert at all times and there must not be breaks in transmission. “It is only with quality and interesting programming that you can sustain your audience. There must never be a dull moment in your programming schedule,” he counseled. Finally, he said, “there must be an added emphasis on training and retraining of manpower, especially in the area of capacity building,” because it takes a lot to achieve such a standard that would keep it in competition on satellite.

He also disclosed that his ministry had approve a new directorate of training and capacity building which he said he hoped would be able to “effectively handle the training and retraining of staff of the station to meet the challenges ahead.”

Mr. Adewunmi Ogunsanya, Chairman of MultiChoice, said the pact was a dream come true and he hoped both parties would nurture the partnership to fruition and to the benefit of Africa as a whole. It would give Nigeria a loud voice in international broadcasting and create a brighter future for the industry generally

With the agreement signed in Lagos, NTA signals would now be received on KU band

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**Senate Passes Media Practice Bill, Repeals three Laws**


The Media Practice Bill among other things makes it compulsory for journalists to have attained ten years professional experience in journalism before they can aspire to become editors, while three others were repealed because they impeded the efficient practice of journalism in Nigeria.

Jonathan Zwingina, Chairman of the Senate Committee on information revealed that the laws repealed are: the Newspapers Amendment Act 1964; the Official Secret Act cap 335 LFN; and the Defamatory and Offensive Publications Decree of 1999 No. 44.

They were repealed through the Bill for an act to provide for the repeal of media laws repugnant to press freedom and contrary to the provisions of the Constitution of the Federal republic of Nigeria and for other connected purposes.


The new media Practice Law stipulates that for a journalist to become an editor, he must be a registered member of the Nigeria Union of Journalists; (NUJ) must have practised journalism in a reputable media house (electronic or print media) for not less than ten years; and
hold at least a first degree, HND or their equivalent in journalism or Mass communications or have practiced for ten years in a recognized media establishment.

Media houses that go against the Media Practice Act according to the Act will be guilty of professional misconduct.

While the Senate action is commendable, it is however seen as half measure because the action does not deal with media laws in a holistic way that Media Rights Agenda (MRA) has been pursuing in the Nigerian Media Bill currently before the lower house of the National Assembly.

MRA had collated all media laws scattered in the nation’s statute books presented them to media stakeholders at a series of workshops during which they were harmonised and streamlined to meet constitutional and international standard and later presented them in one document to the House of Representatives for passage into law.

The Nigerian Media Bill published in Volume 89 of the federal Government’s Official Gazette of August 21, 2002 as government Notice 135 contains 108 sections and six schedules and has undergone two readings.

It deals, among other things, with the laws guiding the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), the News Agency of Nigeria, and the Nigerian Press Council. It also seeks to repeal some existing obnoxious laws incompatible with journalism practice and the guarantees of freedom of expression contained in the 1999 Constitution. They include the Nigeria Media Council Decree 1988; the Nigerian Press Council (Amendment) Decree 60 of 1999; the Defamatory and Offensive Publications Act, Cap. 93 LFN 1990; and the Offensive Publications (Proscription) Decree No. 35 of 1993.

Other laws recommended for repeal are: the Printing Press Regulation Act, Cap. 536 LFN 1990; the Obscene publications Act cap 530, LFN 1990; and certain sections of Cap 77 LFN 1990 and of the Penal Code Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990.

Though the Senate action still needs to pass through the full legislative process including the accent of both the House of Representatives and the President, if it eventually becomes law, the efforts put in at harmonizing all the nation’s media laws may be defeated.

Surge In Demand For GSM Induces New Strategies From Services Providers

The unpredictable and unprecedented demand for GSM phone lines by Nigerians and the inability of the three service providers: the Nigerian Telecommunications limited (NITEL), MTN, and Econet to meet the demand has prompted them to return to their boardrooms to devise new strategies to tackle the unexpected boom in demand ‘while the iron is still very hot.’ This is despite their general poor quality service and a lingering interconnectivity disagreement between NITEL on the one hand and MTN and Econet on the other hand.

While MTN in January commissioned a 3,400 km long microwave transmission backbone and approved a $60 million plan as part of efforts to improve service on its network, Econet is discussing with MSI to buy equity stake in its shares in order to address its present cash crunch, while the Nigerian government has approved the award of several contracts worth N26.6 billion to improve NITEL’s network and also approved the roll out of about 1.4 million GSM lines.

With the demand rising above supply, the law of demand and supply has taken effect in the GSM market. The Subscriber’s Identification Module (SIM) packs which were being sold for N6,000 and N8,000 each for MTN and Econet respectively have short up to N14,000 and N20,000 for MTN and Econet SIM packs. It has even been reported that MTN turned down the offer of a license to operate in Tanzania saying it would not attempt any more foreign expansion until it has completely conquered its Nigerian operations.
MTN, one of Nigeria’s three GSM service providers announced that it had crossed the one million subscribers mark to make history as the first telecom operator in the Nigeria to achieve that feat. The MTN board also approved a $60 million facility for the company to immediately embark on an expansion of network expected to address the rising demand for its GSM lines. But such breakthrough did not come on a platter of gold. Chief Executive Officer of the company, Mr. Adrian Wood, who made the announcement, attributed it to “good judgment and a triumph of hard work, innovation and good planning.”

The MTN network serves its Nigerian subscribers through eight Mobile Switching Centres (MSC) through 400 base stations in 40 towns and 120 communities spread over the states of Nigeria. Mr. Wood however acknowledged the general unsatisfactory “quality of services provided on our network” which he attributed to “high traffic and congestion.” He disclosed that MTN board had approved a $60 million plan to improve its network particularly in high density regions like Lagos, Port Harcourt and Onitcha. He added that they were totally unhappy with the quality of service giving assurance that the problem would be over soon with the planned addition of 200 base stations and five MSCs to it network to improve its services.

MTN had in January commissioned its N15 billion Yhellobhan, a 3,400 km microwave transmission backbone in Lokoja the Kogi State Capital.

Meanwhile, Econet Wireless Nigeria Limited has begun negotiations to secure a partner, Mobile Systems International (MSI) to solve its financial constraint in order “to grow its network and meet the demands of the Nigerian market.” If the negotiations sail through, MSI will take equity stakes in Econet Wireless Nigeria in a deal which will culminate in the injection of a total investment of $500 million by MSI. This will be made up of $200 million for the new equity and $300 million in loans.

However, promoters of the parent body of Econet in Zimbabwe are reported to have put a less attractive counter offer on the table. They propose to bring in new switches and mobile equipment, worth $70 million as they believe that Econet Nigeria could grow out of its present financial predicament.

Though meetings and negations are going on to reach an amicable solution, if the scale tilt in favour of the Econet Nigeria and MSI pact option, MSI will also commence operation of mobile digital license and it would certainly lead to a change in Econet’s identity as the name may be dropped. Right now, the financial and management stakeholders are dealing the card and very soon the joker would decide the fate of Econet.

MSI is a Sudanese-owned Dutch-based operator which was one of the firms that participated in the January 2001 GSM licence auction but did not win one. It is active in Africa

NITEL on its part plans to rollout 1.4 million GSM lines within 18 months. This followed the approval it received from its Board to proceed on the next phase of its GSM expansion plans. The Federal government also approved the award of several contract totaling N26.6 billion to expand its network and ensure better services and wider coverage. Chief Ojo Madueke, the Minister of Transport who disclosed this also added that 1.4 million new GSM lines would be added to the existing lines within the next 18 months and in all the six geo-political zones instead of just 13 cities currently being served.

The surge in demand for GSM service demonstrates the starvation of Nigerians of basic telecommunication services especially voice telephony. This is further strengthened by the computed Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) figure of GSM in Nigeria, that is , the average amount a Nigerian spends of GSM telephone. It is put at $80 (N10,216) per month, the highest in Africa.

The poor service and high tariffs notwithstanding, GSM phones have provided easy communication for majority of Nigerians and expanded the nation’s social, political and economic horizon. It also afforded them the right of choice of service providers, as there are three GSM providers and over a dozen landline providers. The right of choice had been a non-existent option a few years back when acquisition of telephone was expensive and burdensome.
In all these however, the rural areas are still neglected and they cry for provision of telecommunication facilities. Most of the nation’s rural communities lack telecommunication service as well as other basic infrastructures that would enhance the provision of telecommunication facilities like electricity. Providers are reluctant to take services to these communities because of the high investment on facilities and expected low patronage in the rural areas.

IFJ, CPJ Launch Security Handbooks For Journalists Covering Conflicts

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the New York based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) have launched online journalist security handbooks, to prepare journalists for covering dangerous conflicts.


The handbook is available online at: www.ifj.org/hrights/safecontents.html) and will soon be available in print in six languages.

The handbook also highlights the development of the International News Safety Institute, a global coalition of media organisations, journalists and press-freedom groups formed last year to promote practical actions and to provide safety training, materials and assistance to journalists and media staff. The institute will be launched on World Press Freedom Day, May 3, this year.

The CPJ handbook titled “On Assignment: Covering Conflict Safely”, which is available on its website, http://www.cpj.org/Briefings/2003/safety/safety.html, is aimed at editors and journalists covering conflicts. It provides a comprehensive overview of security issues with resources and practical information on topics ranging from training and insurance to body armour and the rules of war.

The CPJ plans to publish a print version of the handbook later.

The organisation said as a possible war in Iraq looms, journalists everywhere have a heightened sense of vulnerability and cites the abduction and murder of Wall Street Journal reporter, Daniel Pearl, early last year and the November 2001 deaths of eight journalists covering the war in Afghanistan.

These incidents, it said, shocked the world, raising many security issues for journalists in the field.

It noted that although many news organizations are now taking measures to better protect their staff, including by sending them to hostile-environment training courses, too many journalists still cover conflicts without the proper preparation.

CPJ hopes to encourage journalists to better educate and protect themselves and their colleagues with the handbook.

The handbook was written by CPJ Washington, D.C., representative and journalist security coordinator Frank Smyth, with input from CPJ staff and journalists worldwide.

Smyth said: “Now, more than ever, journalists need to be aware of battlefield dangers and how to mitigate them. Journalists should be prepared in terms of knowledge, and their employers should be prepared, as well.”

2003 Summer Programme of the Academy on Human Rights & Humanitarian Law

The Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law of the American University in Washington DC is seeking applications for its 2003 Summer Programme to be held from

The Academy offers a programme that meets the need of legal practitioners, counselors in international relief agencies, government agencies, international organizations, and law students specializing in human rights.

The 2003 Summer Programme, to be held at American University Washington College of Law, will offer nine courses in English and six courses in Spanish. The Academy curriculum is designed to provide students with a variety of classes that focus on the most crucial subjects in the field of international human rights, and the faculty includes world-renowned scholars and activities in the human rights field.

Participants in the summer programme may register for courses in English either for academic credit or a certificate of attendance, and courses in Spanish for a certificate of attendance.

The Academy’s Washington location offers opportunities for participants to access key resources and human rights institutions. Participants can take advantage of these resources via on-site visits, specialized conferences, workshops, the distinguished lecture series, and career panels.

During the last Academy session, participants visited the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights; the International Human Rights Law Group; the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; the World Bank Inspection Panel; and the U.S. Department of State.

Participants may also attend workshops that offer training in human rights advocacy skills and career panels that explore growing job opportunities in the field of international human rights.

Keynote speeches, specialized conferences, and the distinguished lecture series bring leading human rights practitioners and distinguished scholars from the US and abroad who are shaping contemporary human rights law. These events are aimed at providing participants with a forum to engage in discussion and networking with the international and local human rights communities.

Further information, including how to apply, may be obtained from Monica Lugo, the Programme Coordinator, at: Telephone: 1 202 274-4295, or by email at: hracademy@wcl.american.edu, or via fax at: 1 202 274-4198.

AMARC Urges Govts. To Enact Laws For Access to Community Media

The World Associations of Community Broadcasters (AMARC) has called on all countries and government authorities, particularly in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean to enact laws which would provide access to community media in equal opportunity to all their citizens, especially women and children.

The association is also asking the governments to provide the necessary support and training which will make community radios viable.

In a communiqué at the end of the Eighth World Conference of Community Broadcasters which took place in Kathmandu, Nepal, last month, members of the association said they considered it an established fact that community media, particularly community radio, had given communities the means of cultural expression, news, information and local dialogue.

According to them, “radio is the most widespread electronic communications device in the world and a unique means of reaching the world’s poorest communities. Community radio broadcasting is increasingly recognized as a bridge across the digital divide between those who have access to the world’s information resources and those who do not.”

The General Assembly of AMARC said it was committed to the realization of the Right to Communicate in its broadest, most inclusive sense and pledged to work to protect its members and those they serve from any infringement of this right.
By so doing, they said, they would contribute to the securing of all the rights included in the United Nations Charter and the rights in other instruments which have been ratified since its establishment. They promised to do so in the open, transparent and accountable manner which they were demanding from the other sectors of the society.

Organised by AMARC International in Montreal, Canada, in collaboration with Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists and Radio Sagarmatha in Nepal, over 250 participants from about 33 countries participated in the conference, which took place alongside the eighth annual general meeting of AMARC. The conference is held every four years.

AMARC, a worldwide network of over 2000 community radios, holds the conference once in every four years. The theme of the Kathmandu 2003 Conference was “Voices for a Better World: Community media and social justice”.

The main objectives of the conference were:

- To strengthen the international community broadcasting movement as a progressive force for social change and as a crucial mean of democratic empowerment through peoples access to mass communications.
- To build a grassroots, South-centered platform for participation in global strategies for the information society.
- To affirm a Kathmandu Declaration placing human rights and social justice at the heart of the global communications policy agenda in preparation for and beyond the World Summit on the Information Society.
- To establish AMARC Asia as a new regional network of community broadcasters and develop an Asian plan of action.
- To reinforce community radio development in Nepal as a model for the South Asian region.
- To provide avenue for grassroots radio practitioners to share experiences, develop networks, acquire new skills, and set the action plan for AMARC International for the next four years.

The overall themes of the conference are as following:

- Development of Community Radio in Asia: Finding a collective voice to move ahead
- People’s Voices and Community Radio development in Asia Building community media as a tool for dialogue and development in Asia and the Pacific
- Women’s voices for a better world: Women’s empowerment in Community Radio Strategies
- Our Voices, Our World: New Approaches to Communication and Development
- Transmission Interference: community radio in conflict situations, Media Portrayals of Conflict
- Our Right to Communicate: Community Media and the Information Society

The following is the full text of the AMARC Katmandu Declaration

AMARC Katmandu Declaration

Preamble:

As governments, private corporations and international non-governmental organizations met in the world’s banking capital for the Second Preparatory Committee of the World Summit on the Information Society, the General Assembly of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters opened in Kathmandu, Nepal, a country in which only 15 percent of people have access to electricity. This assembly of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters convened in Kathmandu in 2003 at a moment when our world is grievously threatened by rampant militarism, accelerated privatization of our most basic resources, religious fundamentalism, and extreme capitalism. These collective forces threaten all human rights as defined in the United Nations Charter on Human Rights. We find it inexplicable and indefensible that many nations have failed to sign this document more than fifty years after its creation. Most of the world’s people including those in Asia exist in conditions of abject poverty which can only be rectified by insuring that all people have access to water, food, shelter, the means of livelihood, and that their cultural and linguistic diversity is protected.
AMARC considers that all of these rights are underpinned by the right to communicate as defined in Article 19 of the UN Charter on Human Rights which includes the opportunity for a free exchange of information and ideas for all people regardless of borders. This right is in great jeopardy where it is recognized and routinely infringed where it is not recognized, as the consolidation of ownership of mass media leaves the control of these domains in the hands of a few.

Despite these conditions or because of them, there are also many hopeful trends regarding rights of communication. The community radio broadcasting movement is rapidly growing including in areas such as Asia where there has been little development of this sector until now. AMARC and its community radio members and partners have been able to demonstrate the possibilities which the right to communicate embodies. They have directly contributed to progressive social change and social justice by providing access to those marginalized and disadvantaged by the mainstream media; have successfully created legislation for the sector in many countries; and have undertaken training projects which have built capacity and contributed to sustaining community access.

There are also openings for representatives of civil society including grassroots movements and non-governmental organizations to participate in global agenda setting in the communications realm. There are vibrant grassroots movements and popular actions emerging and making their presence felt in all global regions.

In light of all of these things, we, the General Assembly of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters declare the following:

**Community Radio:**
- We acknowledge and endorse the African Charter on Broadcasting which defines community broadcasting as that which is for, by and about the community, whose ownership and management is representative of the community, which pursues a social development agenda, and which is non-profit.
- We believe that broadcasting spectra constitute a part of the global commons which should not be privatized, rather that only use rights should be given and that community media should have first access.
- We call on all nations and governmental authorities, particularly those in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa to create legislation which would provide access to all the electronic, especially to community radio in equal opportunity for all, with particular attention to the rights of women and children, and to provide the necessary support and training to make it viable.
- We call upon all nations, governmental authorities and community radios to ensure access and ownership of all means of communications for women.
- We call for regulation of frequency spectra for community radio such that it favors the development of this medium for the use of local communities.

**The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and Beyond:**
- We consider the WSIS that is taking place in Geneva Switzerland in December 2003 and in Tunis, Tunisia in 2005 to be an important venue for highlighting the role of community media in the overall struggle for social justice and people’s empowerment.
- We, along with other progressive media sectors and civil sector actors, abhor the threat to an open Internet or the infringement of rights to privacy in the name of ‘national security’ or a ‘war on terrorism’, and call on all governments and all social forces to oppose these threats whether corporate or governmental.
- We consider that it is an established fact that community media, particularly community radio, have given communities the means of cultural expression, news and information, and local dialogue. Radio is the most widespread electronic communications device in the world and a unique means of reaching the world’s poorest communities. Community radio broadcasting is increasingly recognized as a bridge across the digital divide between those who have access to the world’s information resources and those who do not.
AFRICA ALERT!

Taylor Persists In His Onslaught On Journalists

President Charles Taylor of Liberia has continued the vicious use of state security forces to arrest, detain, intimidate, brutalise and hound independent journalists and human rights campaigners out of Liberia.

The latest victim of the rampant battering and brutal torture inflicted on journalists Throble Suah, a reporter with the independent Inquirer newspaper in Monrovia, was on December 14, 2002, at about 8:30 pm, intercepted by five men from Mr. Taylor’s presidential elite guard, the Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU), when he was returning home from his office. Upon disclosing that he was a journalist, the ATU men pounced on him, brutalised, beat and whipped him severely until he fell unconscious. He was later taken to the St Joseph Catholic Hospital in Monrovia, where he regained consciousness three days later.

On January 11, when Suah was flown into Accra, Ghana, he had to be helped out of the aircraft in a wheelchair. He had gone blind and his lower limbs had been so incapacitated that he could neither walk nor stand unaided. There were also strains of blood in his urine.

On arrival in Accra, with the support of the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), Mr Suah was immediately sent to the Rabito Clinic in Osu, Accra, where the African Commission for Health and Human Rights Promoters (ACHHRP), a non-governmental organisation of doctors for human rights, is based.

The ACHHRP president, Dr. Edmund Delle led a six-man team of renowned Ghanaian doctors to treat Mr. Suah. They are: Dr. Appiah, Orthopaedic surgeon; Dr. Akofu, Ophthalmologist; Dr. J. B. Asare, Psychiatrist, Professor Naeder, Surgeon; and Professor Nyame, Neurologist.

The team of doctors’ diagnosis of January 14 reported that, “the patient seems to be in agony of pains and very nervous. He was having gross neuralgic deficits in both lower limbs and had sensory and motor disfunction. Subsequently, he sustained loss of sight for about seven days.”

Mr. Suah who was able to move his limbs and to take his first difficult steps almost a month after his torture, on February 4 has not fully recovered, and still lives in fear.

Suah arrived in Accra on the heels of Hassan Bility, editor of the independent Analyst newspaper, another journalist torture victim who was arrested on June 24, 2002 and severely brutalised, and tortured almost to death before being detained incommunicado for allegedly plotting to assassinate President Taylor.

Persistent protests and appeals by the MFWA, Liberian and other international human rights bodies finally got the government of Mr Taylor to release Bility on December 7, 2002, on the condition that he agreed to leave the country. Bility, with the support of the US embassies in Liberia and Ghana, had to go through urgent medical checks in Accra, Ghana. He left for the US as a refugee barely two weeks before Suah arrived in Accra.

MFWA had to help evacuate Suah from Liberia for emergency medical attention following the receipt on January 6 of an SOS from the Press Union of Liberia, and a referral medical report from the St Joseph Catholic Hospital, Monrovia, advising that Mr Suah’s condition had deteriorated beyond the hospital’s capacity to handle, “due to [the hospital’s] many limitations.”

The committee to support Journalists, New York, supported Suah’s travel to Accra.

The MFWA expressed alarm over the unending spate of physical assault, cruel torture and sheer impunity being perpetrated by members of President Charles Taylor’s state security against journalists and human rights advocates in Liberia. It called on the government of President Taylor “to take immediate action to stop the harassment of the independent media and stem the worsening tide of atrocities, brutality and predation against journalists, human rights advocates and pro-democracy activists in the country.”
Meanwhile, the Press Union of Liberia has alerted the public of constant threats against some of its members by people believed to be state security operatives. These threats also come in form of surveillance of several of its members. The PUL quoted the threatened members as saying that small groups of men dressed in National police and ATU uniforms have repeatedly visited their homes at odd hours and inquired about their whereabouts.

Two Chadian Journalists Jailed, Publication Shut

Two Chadian journalists were on February 6 sentenced to six months’ imprisonment each for alleged libel. Nadjikimo Bénéoudjita, the publication director and Mbainaye Bétoubam, the deputy editor of Notre Temps were also fined 2M CFA francs (approx. US$3,300) damages and were banned from working as journalists for eight months. Notre Temps was also ordered to shut down for three months.

The charges brought against them by Hadjé Billy Douga stem from a Notre Temps article that alleged that Hadjé Billy Douga, a government official and President Déby’s mother-in-law, had arranged the torture of the men who supposedly stole some of her jewellery. One of the men was alleged to have died from his injuries.

The journalists’ claim that their source of information was the N’Djamena Appeals Court register did not save them from the judge’s hammer.

Bétoubam who was absent from the trial due to illness was arrested at his home immediately after the judgment and taken to the N’Djamena prison to join his colleague.

The sentences come on the heels of worldwide view that custodial sentences for alleged libel are wholly inappropriate and that such cases should be dealt with by civil courts.

Armed militia Raid Somalia’s Only Independent Broadcasters

The offices of HornAfrik, Somalia’s only independent broadcasters were raided by armed militia allegedly acting on the orders of a businessman after it aired a news report about a book linking Somalia businessmen with terrorism. The militia forced the technicians and journalists to shut down the station’s broadcast and vacate the premises. The workers remained outside for several hours, and the station reopened only after peaceful negotiations.

HornAfrik has been operating under threat from the government, and expressed fears that the raid may be part of a campaign to shut down the broadcaster. Its journalists have faced constant intimidation and threats in a society with no protection of press freedom, says Canadian Journalists for Free Expression (CJFE)

Last November, CJFE awarded the station an International Press Freedom Award for its efforts to pioneer independent reporting in the war-torn country. The broadcaster’s call-in programs are immensely popular across the country, affording every one of Somalia’s warlords the opportunity to appear on its shows.

Prior to its establishment, Somalia’s radio stations were owned and operated by warlords who used them to spread their own propaganda.

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has expressed concern and drawn attention to press freedom situation in the country.

Journalists Face Renewed Violence in War-torn Ivory Coast

Journalists in war-torn Ivory Coast have continued to face human rights abuses in the course of carrying out their journalistic profession. This is in spite of the new peace treaty committing its leaders to respect press-freedom and human rights. At least two media houses have been attacked and four journalists assaulted after the signing of the Linas-Marcoussis treaty. This has raised concerns over increasing violence against the media.

A crowd of anti-French protesters on 26 January destroyed the offices of the private radio station Radio Nostalgie in Abidjan whose director, Hamed Bakayoko, is a member of the
opposition party Republican Rally. On the same day, youths ransacked the offices of the private Le Jour newspapers and assaulted two of its journalists. The youths were protesting the signing of the peace treaty. According to Reporters Without Borders (Reporters sans frontières, RSF) the newspaper had recently published reports linking Ivorian security forces with death squads.

In another instance, Fraternité Matin photographer N’Guessan N’Guessan and an Agence France Presse journalist were also attacked by protesters.

The new Ivorian government of national reconciliation under the Linas-Marcoussis treaty had condemned the “incitement to hatred and xenophobia disseminated by certain media outlets.” The government also pledged to re-instate foreign radio and television broadcasts and guarantee the neutrality and impartiality of public media outlets.

The press in the Ivory Coast is both a victim of the crisis facing the country today and partly responsible for it, RSF said. It adds that the press is also playing a pernicious role in the crisis. A number of publications have during the period published racist or xenophobic articles, putting the safety of large numbers of people at risk. RSF named Le National, L’œil du peuple, and the newspaper of the party in power, Notre Voie, as being among media organs that constantly stoke the flames of conflict by publishing inflammatory editorials and articles inciting violence.

Since the September 19, 2002 attempted coup in the country, both Ivorian and foreign journalists have been beaten up by members of either the state police force or rebel movements. Attacks, arrests, and threats to media professionals are almost daily affairs in the war-torn country.

RSF welcomed the signing of the treaty and called on government leaders to honour their commitment to press freedom and ensure the safety of journalists in the country.

International Human Rights Law Programmes At Oxford University

The Department for Continuing Education at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom is seeking applications for its Masters degree programme in international human rights law, which begins in July, as well as its summer school.

The programme is designed for future leaders in the international human rights field and will have a maximum of 20 participants. The programme emphasises in roughly equal measure the development of advocacy skills, the substance of human rights law and the capacity to conduct research on-line as well as in libraries.

The course seeks to impart the capacity not only to know but also to practice human rights law. The programme of study is designed primarily for early and mid-career lawyers, but also admits other professionals with extensive human rights experience. Students in previous courses have regularly included lawyers, government officials, representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international organizations and national human rights commissions, as well as the military, police, media and universities.

The degree is taught on a part-time basis, and includes two periods of residence in Oxford, as well as distance learning components. The primary reason for this format is to allow full-time professionals in organisations that can ill afford their absence for extended periods of full-time study to undertake advance education. The total period of residence in Oxford is three months.

The Summer School has completed its eighth year. Enrolment in the Summer School is limited to 80 participants who usually come from about 30 countries. The Summer School lasts for one month and places emphasis on developing advocacy skills.

Further information, including how to apply, can be obtained from the University’s website at www.conted.ox.ac.uk/humanrightslaw.
Project Launches HIV/AIDS Resources

The Synergy Project of Social and Scientific Systems has launched an HIV/AIDS Programming Toolkit Website and CD-ROM, a user-oriented, electronic one-stop-shop of HIV/AIDS programming resources. The toolkit is available at: http://www.synergiaids.com/apdime/index.htm#

Developed in collaboration with the University of Washington Center for Health Education and Research (CHER), the Toolkit contains five modules of the programming cycle covering Assessment, Planning, Design, Implementation Monitoring, and Evaluation (APDIME).

Each module outlines a comprehensive step-by-step method and links to hundreds of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and partner resources for programming. The Toolkit also contains a database of more than 800 technically reviewed documents, tools and materials to improve HIV/AIDS programming in resource poor countries.

HIV/AIDS specialists may submit materials for inclusion in this shared resource.

The Synergy Project’s APDIME approach is based on the use of participatory methods that build stakeholder commitment, produce programs that suit prevailing or local conditions, and place people keep living with or affected by AIDS at the center. The Synergy Project is funded by the USAID and managed by TtV Global Health and Development Strategies, a division of Social & Scientific Systems, Inc.

The CD-Rom can be ordered online using the “order CD-Rom” button on any module of the online toolkit on the website.

ATTACKS ON THE PRESS IN FEBRUARY 2003

Journalist Assaulted by Security Officer

The Ogun State Correspondent of The Punch newspapers, Mr. Niyi Odeboade was on February 10 assaulted by a State security Service (SSS) officer attached to the Abeokuta home of Nigeria’s former Head of the Interim government of Nigeria Chief Ernest Shonekan.

The SSS officer said he assaulted Mr. Odeboade because he pleaded for a taxi driver he arrested for allegedly illegal parking. Odeboade was rescued from more terrible harm by the intervention of his colleagues with whom he had gone to Oke-Ilewo, a suburb of Abeokuta to attend a press conference.

The SSS officer however vowed to deal with him wherever they met.

MEDIA / PRESS FREEDOM AWARDS

IFJ Calls for Entries For 2003 Natali Journalism Prize

Applications are invited from journalists worldwide for the 2003 Natali Prize for Journalism recognising excellence in human rights reporting.

The prize, administered by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), is awarded to print and/or on-line journalists who have demonstrated a striking insight and particular dedication to the reporting of human rights issues within the context of the development process.

Prizes worth 10,000 Euros (US$10,750) each will be awarded to a deserving journalist from six regions: Europe (EU Member and Non-Member States); Africa; the Arab World, Iran and Israel; Asia and the Pacific; and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Eligible entries should be only articles published between 1 January and 31 December 2002.
Further information can be obtained from Ann-Christina Hansen, International Federation of Journalists; International Press Centre, Résidence Palace; 155, rue de la Loi; B-1040 Brussels; Belgium; Tel: +32 2 235 22 07; Fax: +32 2 235 22 19; E-mail: projects@ifj.org or from the website: http://www.ifj.org/hrights/lorenzo/inpr.html

The deadline for entries is 31 May 2003.

Applications Sought for 2003 Kurt Schork Awards

The Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism invites applications from journalists for the 2003 Kurt Schork Awards in International Journalism, which recognises independent and professional reporting that shed new light on controversial issues. US$10,000 prizes would be awarded to two winners: one to a local reporter in a developing country or country in transition, and the other to a freelance journalist covering international news.

The awards, named in honour of Kurt Schork, the American journalist killed in Sierra Leone in 2000 while reporting for the Reuters news agency was established in 2002. They are underwritten by the Kurt Schork Memorial Fund and Reuters, and administered by the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

Winning entries will be judged on the quality of writing and investigative effort, as well as the degree of courage and resourcefulness demonstrated. Journalists’ articles can focus on conflict, human-rights concerns, cross-border issues, or any other issue of controversy in a particular country or region.

For more information, contact Irena Choi Stern, Administrator, Kurt Schork Awards, Columbia University, 2950 Broadway, New York, NY 10027; +212 854 8653; E-mail: ics9@columbia.edu. Full details of award criteria and application forms are available at the website: www.jrn.columbia.edu/events/schork

Deadline for applications is May 1, 2003.

The ICIJ Rewards Outstanding International Investigative Reporters

The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) awarded the star prize of $20,000 for its fifth edition of the Outstanding International Investigative Reporting to Thomas Maier, the Newsday reporter for his five-part series, “Death on the Job: Immigrants at Risk.”

Five other entries from three countries were also selected to each receive the $1,000 finalists’ awards.

Maier’s series revealed that New York State had the highest rate of immigrant workers killed on the job in the United States. It found that 4,200 immigrants died in workplace-related incidents in the United States between 1994 and 1999, more than 500 of them in the state of New York.

The series also showed that in every U.S. state where immigrants flocked for green pasture during the economic boom of the 1990s, foreign-born workers were more vulnerable to die in the workplace than native-born workers. He relied on government documents, court records and extensive interviews in the United States and El Salvador.

The report also revealed that victims and their survivors waited years for compensation and that hundreds of immigrant worker deaths nationwide were never investigated by the government.

The ICIJ award judges described the series as “… investigative journalism in its best sense” for “spotlighting a topic that had not even been noticed, during a year when most people (including the media) were focusing on immigrants as potential threats, not potential victims of the great U.S. economy.”

The five other finalists are Bamidele Adebayo of TheNEWS magazine in Nigeria, for his investigation into a financial scam that drained money from a Brazilian bank and had ramifications on two continents; Jeffrey Goldberg of The New Yorker for his examination of Saddam Hussein’s campaign of genocide against the Kurds of northern Iraq; Stephen Grey,
Jonathan Ungoed-Thomas, Gareth Walsh, Joe Lauria, John Goetz, Nicholas Hellen and Richard Miniter of London’s The Sunday Times for their five-part series on the events leading up to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States; Sue Lloyd-Roberts of the BBC for her television documentary on human organ selling and stealing in Moldova; and Sudarsan Raghavan, Sumana Chatterjee and Tish Wells of the Knight-Ridder news service for their investigation into how boys on Ivory Coast farms are enslaved and forced to harvest cocoa for American consumers’ chocolate addiction.

The ICIJ Award for Outstanding International Investigative Reporting is unique among journalism awards worldwide in that it was created specifically to honor international investigative reporting. It is a project of the Center for Public Integrity and the annual award is made possible by a grant from The John and Florence Newman Foundation of San Antonio, Texas.

Competition for the 2002 award attracted 69 entries from 23 countries, involving reporting in 63 countries. Eligible entries must involve investigative reporting in at least two countries and is open to professional journalists or team of journalists of any nationality working in print, broadcast or online media.

The award will be presented in London in June 2003 at a meeting of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists.

ICFJ Calls for Application for ASNE International Journalism Exchange

The International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) is calling for applications from newspaper editors for the International Journalism Exchange programme sponsored by the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

Through this programme, 10 top newsroom managers of daily newspapers are invited to the United States for a five-week programme, the core of which is four weeks at a U.S. newspaper. The visiting editors have an opportunity to observe all aspects of producing a U.S. daily, and are invited to exchange ideas and information with the host newsroom staff and community.

The goals of the programme are to strengthen the independent press overseas and to enhance U.S. understanding of other cultures and journalism around the world. Writing and reporting are not objectives of the programme. The programme has three phases: Phase I: Orientation in Washington, D.C; Phase II: Assignments at U.S. Newspapers; and phase III: New York Debriefing.

To be eligible for the programme, applicants must be principal editors of daily newspapers. Priority will be given to editors from democracies in the developing world, including Asia, Africa, Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics.

The following criteria are used to select 10 senior-level editors to participate in the program.

- Level of newsroom responsibility held by the applicant. The ideal applicant is an editor-in-chief or deputy editor-in-chief.
- High proficiency in English. Applicant must be interviewed by a native English-speaker who fills out an English Evaluation Form.
- Demonstrated goals for participation in the program. Applicant must write a 300-word essay describing what he/she wants to learn during the program. The applicant should explain why participating in the program would be useful to his/her news organization.
- Journalistic experience. Applicant should have at least five years of newspaper experience.
- Current employment at a daily newspaper or news service. Exceptions are considered on an individual basis. What are the program conditions?

Applicant must submit a complete application form with two issues of his/her newspaper.
The ASNE IJE programme is fully funded. It provides round-trip international airfare, all domestic program-related travel, emergency medical insurance, Washington and New York hotel accommodations and a stipend for meals and incidental expenses. The sponsors also provide lodging in Washington and New York, and housing for the four-week newspaper assignment, mostly in home stays with a newspaper professional. Other than travel and living expenses, the program does not pay any salary or honorarium.

Further information and application form can be obtained from Kentaro Aragaki, Program Officer, International Center for Journalists, 1616 H St. NW, 3rd Floor, Washington, DC 20006 U.S.A.
Fax: 202-737-3700; 202-737-0530, E-mail: ije@icfj.org, kentaro@icfj.org, or from ICFJ’s website: http://www.icfj.org. Electronic application form may also be obtained from mra@mediarightsagenda.org write with subject line: Request for ASNE/ICFJ International Journalism Exchange Application Form

Completed applications must be returned by June 1, 2003, and applicants would be notified of the results in July.

The International Journalism Exchange is an annual professional program for foreign editors sponsored by the American Society of Newspaper Editors and administered by the International Center for Journalists.

WHO Journalism Fellowship For African Health Reporters

The World Health Organisation is urging African health reporters to participate in its annual two-week journalism fellowship in Geneva. Applications must be received by 30 April 2003.

The fellowship, designed to provide reporters with an understanding of the forces shaping global public health, will see senior journalists spend their first two weeks in Geneva attending daily briefings on a range of international public health issues.

Fellows will also have the freedom to pursue their own special interests by attending meetings, lectures and seminars, by interviewing technical experts, and by using WHO’s research resources.

A third week of the fellowship allows fellows to pursue their self-selected research topics anywhere in the world. Once in the field, WHO fellows will study one public health issue, important to their home audience, in a different cultural and political context.

Applicants must have a minimum of five years’ experience in medical, health or foreign affairs reporting in the mainstream print or electronic media. Only one applicant will be selected from sub-Saharan Africa.

The fellowship programme will begin in October, and will be conducted in English. WHO will finance all transportation, housing and moderate living costs while in Geneva and during the third week of field experience.

Fellows will be expected to produce at least two written pieces for publication. One will be a 100-word profile of an incoming fellow, while the second will be a 2 000-word piece on the fellow’s self-selected research focus. Both articles will be published in the Fellowship Bulletin.

Anyone interested in applying for the fellowship should contact WHO fellowship curator Dick Thompson on telephone (+41-22) 791-2684, fax (+41-22) 791-3154, or on email thompsond@who.int. WHO’s website can be visited at: www.who.int

Fellowship To Study HIV/AIDS And The Media

Wits University’s Graduate Journalism Programme is offering two research fellowships for senior journalists to explore the regional media’s handling of HIV/AIDS.

The fellowships, offered in partnership with the Perinatal HIV Research Unit (PHRU), are designed to provoke critical examination of the media’s coverage of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.
The first fellowship grant will see a senior journalist produce an in-depth study of the South African media’s coverage of the pandemic. Candidates for the second fellowship are expected to propose an innovative research and writing project that will provoke debate on the media and HIV/AIDS.

Both fellowships provide a four month full-time work stipend, or the equivalent amount over eight months of part-time work. Fellows in full time employment will be expected to secure a leave of absence for the duration of their research and other duties. These duties will include design and implementation of the research project, some teaching, and supervision of research assistants.

Fellows will be mentored right through an advisory committee that includes staff from the PHRU and Wits journalism programme.

Applicants must have at least five years experience in journalism and/or research, and must also be able to prove leadership qualities for working with a team of researchers. The research projects must be completed by November 15, with presentation by December 01, 2003.

Anyone interested in applying should send their CVs, at least two contactable professional references, other relevant documentation, and a motivational letter to Saucy Warnasuriya on fax (+27-11) 938-3973 or via email on saucy@hivsa.com

Further information is available from Professor Anton Harber on harbera@gsh.wits.ac.za.

Yale Law School Knight Fellowships in Law for Journalists

Journalists are invited to apply for the Knight Fellowship of the Yale Law School. It follows the first-year curriculum at Yale Law School, taking basic required courses in the fall term and electives in the spring term.

Fellows receive a Master of Studies in Law degree. Fellows also receive a $27,500 stipend from the Knight Foundation for living expenses and a grant from the Yale Law School that covers tuition and fees.

For forms and further information, contact: Graduate Programs, P.O. Box 208215, New Haven, CT 06520-8215; Tel: (203) 432-1696; Fax: (203) 432-7362; E-mail: gradpro.law@yale.edu; Web site: http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/lawschool/gradpro/mslj/

"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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