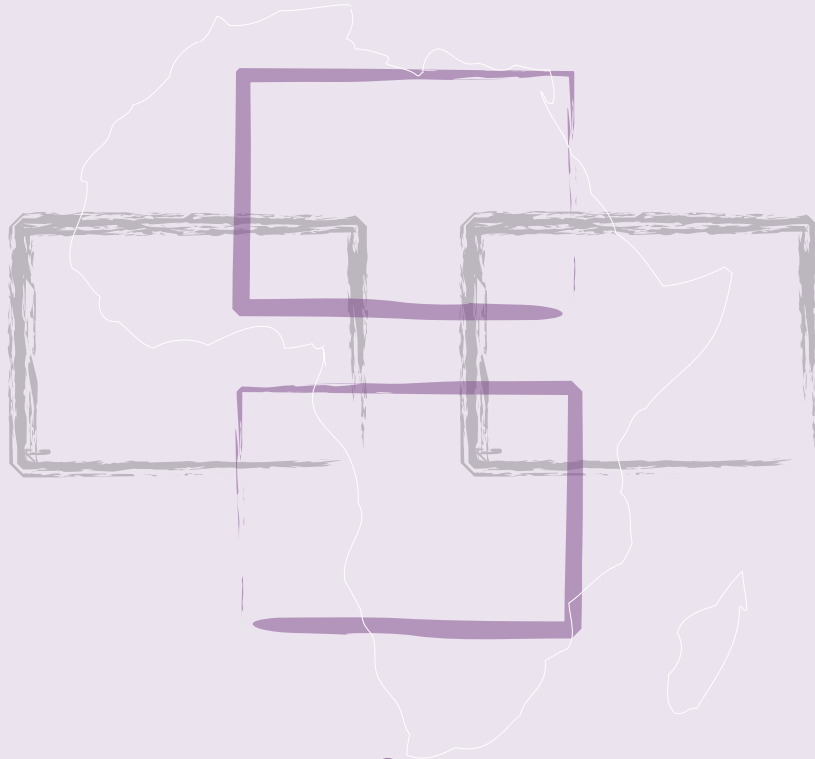




Economic Commission
for Africa



African Framework for the Development of a Sustainable and Pluralistic Media

I n f o r m a t i o n a n d C o m m u n i c a t i o n S e r v i c e

July 2007



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The Framework was compiled by the STREAM Secretariat, hosted by the Information and Communication Service (ICS) of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and comprises Mercy Wambui, Martha Mogus and Sitra Youssuf, under the leadership of Josiah Maximilian Bankole Jarrett and the lead STREAM Communication for Development Consultant, Peter da Costa.

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Acronyms

ADB	African Development Bank
ADF	African Development Forum
AEEN	African Economics Editors Network
AISI	African Information Society Initiative
AMDI	African Media Development Initiative
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CfA	Commission for Africa
DFID	Department for International Development
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
FEMNET	African Women's Development and Communication Network
GEMSA	Gender and Media Network of Southern Africa
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
ILO	International Labor Organization
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFWA	Media Foundation for West Africa
MISA	Media Institute for Southern Africa
NWICO	New World Information and Communication Order
PANA	Pan African News Agency
PIWA	Panos Institute for West Africa
OSF	Open Society Foundation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAEF	Southern African Editors Forum
SAMDEF	Southern African Media Development Fund
STREAM	Strengthening Africa's Media
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society

Introduction

“Only a healthy media sector can fulfill its obligations. If media publishers and broadcasters in both the public and private sectors lack financial resources and security, if they do not uphold professional standards, and if they use reporters and editors who are inadequately trained or experienced, they will fail to live up to the standards that underpin public confidence”*

The media in Africa has a critical role to play in the development of the continent. Over the past twenty years, through tenacity and persistence, media stakeholders in various fields have staked this claim boldly and convincingly. Through their courage, intellect and tenacity many of them have helped to force positive changes in their societies, through the power of the pen or constructive use of the airwaves.

It must be stressed at the onset that this dynamic has been indigenous. All the changes and trends (both good and bad) observed in the media landscape in Africa since the late 1980s (such as the revival of bold investigative journalism, a blossoming community media sector, the profusion of talk shows, a concentration of new privately owned media organizations in several countries, as well as the politicized fragmented patterns of media ownership, etc.) have largely been shaped and pioneered by the media itself, not by government declarations or even very much by external support.

Nonetheless, it is also clear that much more now needs to be done to capitalize on these trends, to ensure that this dynamism can be supported to better meet the needs of all in society and to enable the media sector to develop in a sustainable manner over the long term and is able to contribute to the building of a healthy public sphere.

Recent years have also seen unprecedented attention focused on Africa’s development challenges and the priority actions that should be undertaken by Africans and the international community in order to meet them effectively. Following the recommendations of the 2005 United Nations World Summit Outcome document, a consensus has emerged around the immediate need for a *big push*, a major comprehensive scaling-up of effort and resources (both financial and intellectual) in support of Africa’s development efforts. This is necessary if any headway is to be made in turning the situation around. At the heart of this new impetus is the need to address the capacity constraints faced by numerous institutions and sec-

* Consensus Statement, the Fourth African Development Forum (ADF-IV). More than a thousand delegates from all over Africa participated in ADF IV on the theme, “Governance for a Progressing Africa,” at the headquarters of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 11–15 October, 2004. ADF is an initiative intended to advance an Africa-driven development agenda. It aims to initiate dialogue, build consensus and mobilize partnerships around African stakeholder goals. See <http://www.uneca.org/adfv>.

tors essential to the development and maintenance of vibrant open societies and accountable, well-governed and effective States in Africa. This is seen as critical as there is “*a clear consensus that good governance and sustainable development are two sides of the same coin*”. In that context, it is acknowledged that effective media are a vital ingredient in the establishment and maintenance of effective, transparent, and accountable States that promote development, protect human rights, respect the rule of law, and ensure that people are free to participate in, and be heard on decisions that affect their lives.

This argument is cogently advanced in the first African Governance Report (AGR I) I, which calls for a new large-scale and comprehensive, African capacity-building initiative to address deficits in key areas, including the media. The Commission for Africa (CfA), established by British Prime Minister Tony Blair in 2004, also made a similar recommendation within its “coherent package for Africa” which, among other things, called for the strengthening of institutions that improve accountability, including **parliaments, local authorities, the media, and the justice system**.

In particular, the Commission’s report² identified the media as a critical agent for promoting good governance and proposed the creation of an “*Africa media development facility*”. This proposal was a response by

the CfA to a submission on this issue that incorporated the recommendations that emanated from a conference on media and development that was organized by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) World Service Trust and the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) in November 2004³. The Trust soon after launched the African Media Development Initiative (AMDI) as a project to “*promote the development of pluralistic media as a key information and accountability mechanism for democratic development in Africa*”⁴.

At the same time, following publication of the Commission’s recommendations, DFID, which has been tasked with helping to implement the findings of the Commission for Africa Report, asked ECA to use its convening power to bring together a cross-section of stakeholders in the African media sector. The aim was to discuss the CfA proposal and forge a consensus strategy on the way forward around strengthening media and communication development in Africa. DFID provided funding to ECA to undertake this initiative and the Open Society Foundation (OSF) Network Media Programme also provided pivotal support.

The ensuing ‘*Strengthening Africa’s Media*’⁵ (STREAM) consultation process was conceptualized and undertaken by ECA in partnership with leading players in the media sector in the region between April

1 The first African Governance Report (AGR I) was based on a study conducted in 27 countries, which sampled the opinions of over 50,000 households and 2,000 experts. <http://www.uneca.org/agr2005/>

2 “Our Common Interest”, CfA, published on 11 March 2005. <http://www.commissionforafrica.org/english/report/introduction.html>

3 “Towards 2005: What role does the media have in the fight against global poverty?” See <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/news/files/speeches/bennmedia24nov04.asp>

4 http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/specials/1552_trust_amdi/page3.shtml

5 <http://www.uneca.org/africanmedia/>

2006 and January 2007. The consultation process provided a platform for African media actors in collaboration with their support partners, to articulate concerns and perspectives, identify priority issues and areas requiring support, and propose concrete initiatives and programmes towards a strengthened media sector.

The approach adopted by the STREAM Secretariat and Taskforce focused on launching a process that was as inclusive, consultative and interactive as possible with special emphasis on regional ownership and leadership of both the agenda and the roll out. The STREAM membership went beyond media practitioners and those traditionally involved in capacity building of African media. It included media lecturers and students, international foundations, the World Bank, various UN agencies such as UNDP, ILO, UNESCO, the African Development Bank and even the Peace and Security Department of the African Union (AU) and others who clearly see the strong link between the development of the African media and governance. Stakeholders from over 40 countries took part in the online dialogue and were involved in the actual consultations.

The STREAM consultation process comprised a structured online discussion (<http://www.dgroups.org/groups/AMDP>) and five consultation meetings, funded by OSF and DFID, designed to garner views from different constituencies that fall under African media. Participation was solicited from a variety of disciplines, from mainstream media organizations to gender communication

networks. A majority of the participants represented organizations within Africa.

Five consultation meetings were also organized as part of the process. The Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA) led the organization of the consultation workshop for that region in June 2006, while in July 2006 the Panos Institute for West Africa (PIWA) facilitated the organization of a workshop for Francophone Africa in Dakar. The Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) organized the third meeting of the consultation process in Accra in September 2006 and, in the same month, the fourth consultation was organized in Nairobi by the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET). The final consultation took place in Cairo in January 2007 and was facilitated by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies.

The main aims of the STREAM process were two-fold:

- a) To arrive at a shared understanding of the state of the media and communication sector in Africa; and
- b) To agree on concrete recommendations and proposals that will bring about a more coherent and inclusive set of media and communication development interventions in Africa.

This document, the main outcome of the consultations, highlights the major challenges cited by stakeholders and also the concrete actions proposed to address them. It is a companion document to the larger

final report of the entire STREAM process, which in turn provides comprehensive details of the context of this unprecedented, stakeholder-led initiative, the methodology adopted, as well as the findings and recommendations of the e-consultations and all the subregional meetings.

In that regard, as a summary of the consensus that emerged from the consultations, this report is intended to be focused and action-orientated, rather than exhaustive in its coverage of the agenda and issues. Its main thrust is to articulate a framework for an African-owned and -led media development agenda to address the existing deficits faced in and by the media sector in the region. Its proposals are set against the urgent need for effective partnerships towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that world governments have set themselves to achieve by the year 2015. These targets include reducing poverty, promoting gender equality, halving major infections, such as HIV/AIDs, malaria, and tuberculosis and building a sustainable environment.

A strong media and communication environment is critical to a developed and prosperous Africa. This framework document is therefore predicated on the recognition that the MDGs cannot be achieved without sustained political will and investment, which would among others, require a free

and democratic environment in which the media can play an effective role in promoting sustainable development, fighting corruption and promoting good governance.

Stakeholders who participated in the STREAM process were unanimous that the track record of international donor support in strengthening media and communication in African countries has been mixed, while African governments have by and large failed to put in place the enabling environment to ensure a robust media and communication sector. As a result, the impact of what little investment in media has come Africa's way has been fragmented.

With a view to moving the agenda forward, this framework aims to achieve the following:

- a) To accentuate the consensus among African media development actors on the key priorities to be addressed;
- b) To rally international media support actors around the African agenda articulated herein; and
- c) To ensure that future support to the sector in Africa is coherent, coordinated and fully responsive to the challenges at hand.

Attached to this document is a matrix of proposals that spell out the targets for delivery.

I. Context

I. Democratization and Media Diversity

In the late 1970s, one of the main concerns of post-colonial Africa was the unbalanced information flow between the continent and the industrialized North and the negative image of Africa and Africans portrayed in the major news agencies of the world. Arising out of this concern, the Organization for African Unity (OAU) created the Pan African News Agency (PANA) in 1979 to “*rectify the distorted image of Africa created by international news agencies and to let the voice of Africa be heard on the international news scene.*”

As concerns grew globally, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) provided the forum for a vigorous debate on media development, culminating in calls for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). Pushed by countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, NWICO highlighted problems of commercialization, unequal access to information and communication, and the existing media concen-

tration. It advocated for strengthening of national media to reduce dependence on external sources.

At the same time, continent wide, there was considerable concern about press freedom, freedom of expression and media repression as the 1970s and 1980s were marked by military dictatorships and one-party state systems across Africa. In many countries, there were very few media entities in operation apart from state-controlled outlets, which served as mouthpieces of the government of the day.

Over the past 15 to 20 years, there has been notable progress and a significant shift towards democratization and media diversity in Africa. Mainstream, alternative and new forms of media, such as community and privately owned commercial media, have steadily emerged and grown in numbers and diversity of opinion. The growth is in large part due to the space created by the shift from dictatorial regimes to multiparty democracies and elections as well as the end of the cold war and internal calls for democratic reform. In many African countries, as new media entities have emerged,

state-owned media, equally important for the public interest, has stagnated in the face of competition and diversity.

The growth of independent and pluralistic media in the 1990s was characterized by an urgent need to move from top-down, state-driven propaganda to message-driven and participatory forms of dialogue and expression. On the one hand, organic community media networks and associations across Africa emerged to give voice to marginalized and isolated communities in the wave of the democratic reform that was sweeping the continent. On the other hand, a wave of privately owned newspapers began emerging in many countries with a focus on monitoring government and holding it accountable to the public at large.

For instance, in the post “Agenda 21” round of UN negotiations on desertification and biodiversity issues, a pilot community media initiative in East Africa created a much-needed space for the Maasai community in Tanzania’s Simaanjiro District to organize and articulate their views on the role of communities in natural resources management. At the local level, land rights violations were addressed, based on the global imperatives and agreements emerging from these negotiations. In South Africa, community radio stations, once outlawed in the oppressive apartheid era, mobilized communities around the issues that defined the new South Africa. These stations served as models to similar initiatives emerging in the rest of Africa.

At the same time, a new crop of determined and fiercely independent newspaper journalists began establishing their own

newspapers in countries such as Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. They saw their mission as playing a ‘watchdog’ role over government – an essential role of the media in a democracy.

2. Harnessing the potential of ICTs

The 1990s also witnessed a surge in the take-up of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in Africa. While mainstream mass media outlets harnessed ICTs to achieve significant efficiencies and economies of scale, the period saw the emergence of pioneering grassroots media initiatives for their leverage. Integrating ICTs in traditional media offered a diversified media and medium. At the regional level, the African Information Society Initiative (AISI) was established in 1994 to enable African leaders and planners to position Africa in the world’s rapidly expanding global economic system and accelerate the pursuit of Africa’s development goals. A decade later, AISI, which emphasizes the symbiosis between media and ICTs, remains a key African framework for integrating ICT policies in national development frameworks as well as in the MDGs.

For close to a decade, the Highway Africa initiative, an annual collaboration between Rhodes University in South Africa, the private sector and development partners to showcase and promote new media, has also helped to engender a new breed of networked, multimedia-savvy African journalists.

Additionally, in recent years, the digital era, and with it the convergence of new technologies with traditional/conventional media, has raised critical policy questions on conventional regulatory telecommunications frameworks that lag behind new and emerging technologies. With access to new technologies and with improved bandwidth and Internet infrastructure, ordinary citizens can bypass the hurdles of access to frequencies and licenses by appropriating digital or video cameras and audio players to publish, podcast, videocast or stream stories on independent Internet blogs.

The digital age and the ubiquitous nature of the Internet have also challenged the traditional definition of journalism, forcing the mainstream or mass media to adapt or face extinction. “*Citizen journalism*”, including the generation of news content and analysis by individuals and independent groups of citizens world wide, is an important dimension of this emerging phenomenon. The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process fostered discussion on how to address the range of emerging issues accompanying the juxtaposition of new with old media. With more Africans able to access other forms of communications, such as mobile telephony, the emphasis rightly remains on converging these newer technologies with radio, which has the widest reach and is most accessible to marginalized communities.

International and regional processes have also been instrumental in advancing media pluralism. The UNESCO-organized meeting in Namibia in May 1991 resulted in the

landmark ‘*Windhoek Declaration on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press*’⁶. It has been acknowledged that the Windhoek Declaration falls in line with the principle of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which accepts information as a “*fundamental right, and public property at the service of humanity*” and encourages African States to “*provide the constitutional guarantees necessary for press freedom*” and for the emergence of a pluralistic press on the continent.

It also featured a groundbreaking definition of independent media as: “*a press independent from governmental, political or economic control or from control of materials and infrastructure essential for the production and dissemination of newspapers, magazines and periodicals*”. In particular, the Declaration recommends the elimination of all economic and legal obstacles to the establishment of new media outlets.

In support of the Windhoek Declaration, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 3 May as World Press Freedom Day, creating the space for national as well as international debate on media freedom. More than a decade after Windhoek, studies have reported progress as well as gaps between the Declaration and its interpretation in national legal frameworks, laws and constitutions and its enforcement at the national level.

At the policy level, regional advocacy led to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, in Article 9, which echoes Article

6 http://www.chr.up.ac.za/hr_docs/african/docs/other/other23.doc

19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In addition, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has elaborated the issue of media pluralism and freedom of expression in its *Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa*. It promotes the development of private broadcasting and echoes the African Charter on Broadcasting, adopted in 2001 on the tenth anniversary of the Windhoek Declaration. The African Charter on Broadcasting encourages the development of private broadcasting, transformation of state and government broadcasters into genuine public broadcasters, and the need for independent broadcasting regulatory bodies.

Internationally, various commitments recognize the importance of free, pluralistic, and independent media. Development agencies, donors and international organizations are also increasingly paying attention to these commitments: The Tunis phase of WSIS came up with an action plan that includes an action line that points to "*media in their various forms and with a diversity of ownership..*" as a main actor having an essential role in development of the Information Society, freedom of expression and plurality of information. It also encourages development of domestic legislation that guarantees the independence and plurality of the media and urges appropriate measures that are consistent with freedom of expression, to combat any illegal and harmful media

contents. Additionally, the 2005 Commission for Africa report recommended to the G-8 Summit that substantially increasing spending on media support strategies and ICTs was essential for ensuring accountability and transparency in government.

Overall, the media landscape has benefited from the media support institutions established, partly in response to the wave of democratic reform and the proliferation of media. The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) is emblematic of the capacity that now increasingly resides in African media-support organizations. MISA was set up to maintain and foster an independent, pluralistic and free press, seen as "*vital to the maintenance of democracy in a nation, and for economic development.*" Its programmes include freedom of expression, broadcasting diversity, media monitoring, gender, media support and legal support.

Other African organizations that have helped strengthen the media environment include the Media Foundation for West Africa, Panos Institute for West Africa, while institutions such as Gender Links and FEMNET have sought to amplify women's voices by building the capacity of journalists to seek out gender angles in their reporting, and advocating for gender equality in the larger policy context. A host of international actors and initiatives have also helped assert the importance of an African media development agenda.



II. Outstanding Challenges



Despite the recent political changes, institutional reform and a changed media policy and operating environment in many countries, the effectiveness of Africa's media continues to be hampered by a number of critical challenges. At the same time, there appears to be a widening gulf separating the interests of big (commercial and public) players from small (community and alternative) media players. The nature of Africa's evolving diverse media calls for recognition that both are equally important and must be nurtured in tandem. Big media players are essential if large numbers of citizens are to be included in the information loop, and for impacts on governance and accountability to be most effectively registered at scale. However, small media players have a strategic role in providing alternative points of view and can effectively cater for dissenting and minority voices and the needs of rural and marginalized community groups. In terms of the value-chain, the smaller players have a critical role to play as guardians of local spheres, creating resonance between the various players in public spaces, across borders and common languages.

In this context, the following constitute the

five most critical challenges facing the media sector in Africa today:

I. Media Freedom

As a result of efforts by media advocates and democratization in the last decade, most countries in Africa have constitutions that guarantee freedom of expression and information. At the same time, these rights are embedded in the regional instruments, such as the Windhoek Declaration, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, whose Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa enshrines freedom of expression, including the development of broadcasting services.

Most African countries now subscribe to regional and international human rights instruments that guarantee these rights. However, while media regulation and policies have improved since independence, many African countries still carry the legacy of the colonial period. Many Anglophone countries in East Africa, for example, are yet to repeal their Secrecy Acts and Penal

code sections that criminalize libel. Attacks on and destruction of property in media houses by governments have brought to the fore the gaps between international and regional instruments and their application/ interpretation at the national level.

There also remains a very serious situation of media freedom in North Africa, mainly in Tunisia and Libya. North African countries continue to practice their hegemony over the information infrastructure, and monopolize in one way or another, the distribution of Internet services. Governments in this subregion also continue to seek to restrict the flow of information through several technological means, by using various forms of web content control. These include restrictions imposed on the alternative media (such as internet “bloggers”).

Particularly in repressive and authoritarian regimes, the media is either compromised or is in adversarial relationships with governments. As a result, it is unable to play an effective role as the guardian of the public sphere and cannot effectively deal with Africa’s poverty challenges. For the most part, this is due to lack of societal transformation, which is only possible through the use of the media for civic education and when the media is able to reflect the public’s demand for accountability in government. As a result, citizens remain unaware of alternative viewpoints and are denied the opportunity to debate and question leadership and expose deceit and corruption.

2. Policy

The need for a critical review and overhaul of the legal and policy environment in which the media operates across Africa cannot be overstated. Of particular concern are policies relating to issues such as defamation and the legal protection of investigative journalists attempting to inform on corruption, governance and accountability issues.

Furthermore, most current regulatory frameworks are not relevant to the demands and situation of the technological environment in which the media now operates, where traditional forms of broadcasting and dissemination of media output/products are changing rapidly, with the introduction of all manner of multimedia, such as streaming, podcasting, webcasting and videocasting.

The fast-moving global technological advances of the 21st century now demand that African regulatory frameworks move from frequency allocation to a much more informed and broader media regulation seeking to empower the media to provide the best possible service for citizens within the context of technological convergence, assessments of the benefits and disadvantages of cross-ownership, media concentration and the introduction of quotas for balancing local and foreign content, while respecting the principles of freedom of expression. There is also need for a policy environment that ensures strengthened professional pro-

tection for media personnel. In some circumstances, this will include policies that seek to eliminate legal restrictions on the freedom of trade union organization and secure the right of media professionals to form trade union organizations, lay down their by-laws without any governmental intervention, and reconsider any legal or regulatory restrictions that might deprive media professionals of trade union protection.

3. Capacity and Standards

The media cannot effectively play its role in promoting good governance without journalists, editors and media owners adhering to professional codes of conduct. While numerous media-support organizations have worked with media houses over the past 20 years to improve professional standards, it is acknowledged by many stakeholders that the long-term impact of these efforts has been minimal. The daily application of professional ethical standards by many journalists and editors remains low. Long-term comprehensive professional capacity development of media practitioners and institutions, which seeks to build on projects already undertaken, is therefore needed.

The mushrooming of media and communication training institutions in various countries has also raised concerns about the lack of professional standards. In some instances, there are institutions training media practitioners whose standards do not correspond to industry needs, and retraining is often needed in a number of areas, including in the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs)

and in research and analytical skills. In other instances, relevant institutions may exist but operate almost separately from media houses (newspapers, broadcast/internet media, news agencies, etc.) with little contact or communication to discuss and raise awareness about positive partnerships in relation to training.

In such circumstances, many media houses tend to ignore the training that journalists and other media practitioners receive outside of the work place and there is little effort to entrench this training in the work place. Consequently, there are now compelling appeals for more on-site training to take place directly in newsrooms. This is where editors and managers are present, involved and aware, and therefore training should not only take place in workshop venues away from the newsroom. Indeed, the Southern African Editors Forum (SAEF), in cooperation with the Gender and Media Network of Southern Africa (GEMSA), are two of the organizations already proactively promoting newsroom training for HIV/AIDS reporting in the 14 countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Organizations such as Genderlinks have also had considerable success with raising the profile of women candidates in elections by offering gender and elections training courses in newsrooms in 10 countries of Southern Africa, while also holding complementary workshops outside of newsrooms in these countries.

Unfortunately, the lack of access to computers and high costs of connectivity make it difficult for many media organizations to

access information and deliver high-quality stories at low cost. In addition, inadequate media and management policies and poor wages hamper the day-to-day welfare of journalists, in particular women reporters. Where they exist, media unions and associations are generally weak and incapable of playing a supportive role.

4. Sustainability

The survival and sustainability of the media is a critical issue that is intrinsically linked to content, format and business models. A lack of access to capital, poor financial practices and unstable business environments all impinge on sustainability. With important but isolated exceptions, where effective infrastructure does exist, it is under-supported, under-invested, and personnel are inadequately prepared for the practical business of managing media in a sustainable manner.

Smaller media in many regions of Africa are often largely dependent on donor support and suffer from problems of financial sustainability and lack of skills in financial/strategic planning, monitoring and accountability. Unlike larger media, very little earnings if any are accrued from advertising revenue.

In this regard, learning from successful media support initiatives (financial and institutional) is very important so that what works well can be scaled up. One such success story is the Southern African Media Development Fund (SAMDEF) that is based in Botswana. SAMDEF is one of the few entities that provide revolving loans and grants as well as tailored on-site business train-

ing to media clients who meet laid-down criteria. It provides its services to non-state media in any of the 14 SADC countries.

5. Lack of Quality and Diversity of Content

The capacity to generate and package high-quality local content that is relevant to local conditions and that offers ideological diversity is lacking, as is the financing to train practitioners.

As in other regions of the world (e.g. Europe and the Americas) economics and the requirements of sponsors and the advertising industry can have a profound impact on programming and format. Yet, in terms of diversity of content, there is little or no content analysis that monitors the proportion of content genres and the extent of outreach in Africa. There is need for more balancing of entertainment (movies, music), religious programming, propaganda, with civic education and dialogue on issues that concern the public and that point to a truly democratized free flow of information. In East Africa, for example, the preponderance of religious programming is a controversial issue that might require a healthy debate on the need for quotas to allow for other non-religious content that meets the notion of public service delivery.

Further, the lack of capacity in areas such as content analysis, demographic and audience surveys, sharing of statistical data and research into the role of the media in forming opinion hampers quality and diversity of content.

III. Proposed Actions to Help Develop a Sustainable and Pluralistic Media in Africa

The proposals described below and tabulated in the annexed matrix build on innovative initiatives, aim to significantly reduce duplication, and are intended to address gaps, share good practices and replicate creative approaches in media capacity-building efforts. On the basis of these and other emerging proposals, efforts should now be geared towards finding innovative solutions to the challenges highlighted above, and to ensuring sustained and accurate measurement of progress in implementing the framework on an ongoing basis.

Cluster I: Freedom of Expression and Information:

- Actively promote the adoption and domestication of the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, as well as Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, on freedom of expression, by all African governments;
- Advocate for the adoption, ratification, domestication and implementation of all international and continental freedom-of-information principles, norms and standards;
- Formulate and adopt specific laws related to access to information, whistle blowing, protection of sources, etc.;
- Support efforts to repeal criminal defamation and other so-called 'insult laws', to strengthen the role of the media in terms of holding governments and officials of state accountable to the public;
- Develop an awareness-raising strategy to promote better understanding within the media itself of national media laws, to educate the media on its responsibility to provide accurate information, and to educate the public at large on its rights to information;
- Sensitize lawyers and the judiciary on international and continental standards related to freedom of expression and information;
- Promote civil society efforts to share positive media-related international and regional experiences with translation programmes for comparative media legislations and the jurisprudence of permanent human rights courts, such as the European Court of Human Rights, which endorse freedom of expression and media independence and adoption

of programmes for exchanging visits and expertise among media practitioners.

Cluster 2: Policy and Regulation

- Undertake an audit of existing national laws and policies to identify poor regulation (such as incoherence between media laws and national constitutions) and promote the design and implementation of policies and legal frameworks that enable, rather than stifle, the growth of a strong, pluralistic and sustainable media in Africa;
- Promote legislation to mitigate the negative impacts of media concentration, promote fair competition and ensure diversity;
- Promote good corporate governance among African media enterprises;
- Advocate for the recognition and licensing of the community-broadcasting sector as a distinctive sector in its own right, separate from the private/commercial and public broadcasting sectors, in all African countries;
- Advocate for the transformation of state-owned media into public service media that operates independently from the influence of the State and political parties, in line with internationally recognized norms and practices (and as stated in the African Charter on Broadcasting⁷); and
- Promote establishment of legislation that ensures convergence opportunities for media development.

Cluster 3: Capacity-building

- Undertake a comprehensive audit of existing media training in Africa, identify gaps and problems, and develop proposals to strengthen training;
- Develop minimum standards for training of all kinds by advocating for and developing models for competency testing and academic recognition;
- Promote the establishment of in-house training policies for media houses that promote sequential and on-going learning;
- Advocate for and promote more on-site training as an important strategy for continuous skills building and knowledge acquisition;
- Develop and sustain stronger links between the media and the media-training industry;
- Actively promote and develop media-exchange programmes within Africa as a value-added strategy for strengthening capacity;
- Promote the establishment of networks and associations of media owners to strengthen the capacity to develop and sustain media enterprises;
- Strengthen and, where appropriate, establish regional centres of excellence as a means of overcoming national media capacity-building shortfalls.;
- Establish and strengthen networks of specialized training centres and trainers to rationalize and consolidate thematic training, for example on reporting HIV/AIDS, or multimedia and ICTs, and promote curricula-sharing;
- Promote the pooling of training expertise, mentoring and resources as

⁷ <http://www.misa.org/broadcasting/acb.html>

a means of widening media access to cutting-edge, affordable training;

- Develop accreditation mechanisms for training centres; and
- Pay more attention to application-based training that enhances professional performance and that deepens legal awareness of media freedom and the ethical responsibilities required by such freedom.

Cluster 4: Sustainability:

- Conduct a comprehensive analysis of existing media funds and facilities available to African media, whether private, public or community. Where such funds exist, proposals should seek to strengthen and extend sustainable media, bearing in mind the financing instruments (loans or grants) appropriate to the type of media concerned. Where there are clear gaps, proposals developed should address establishment of new mechanisms as appropriate;
- Advocate for public funding to ensure the development and sustainability of community, local, small and emerging media as well as media producing public-interest content, while ensuring that such funding does not impinge on their freedom and independence;
- Conduct analyses of different models of media funding and co-ownership to inform strategies for the economic sustainability of African media;
- Undertake comprehensive research into the community media sector in Africa, as a means of identifying its reach and scope and strengths and weaknesses. Such research findings will

aid strategy development for sustainable and effective community media in Africa;

- Undertake a study of the conditions in African countries with regard to taxes imposed on the importation of media equipment and inputs, including newsprint. On the basis of the results of the study, advocacy can be mounted for lowering or waiving taxes on the import of media equipment and other inputs;
- Advocate for the removal of unfair competition from state media that is funded by public resources, for example, ending the preferential access of state media to public advertising;
- Advocate for the recognition of the media as a development sector in its own right and avail investor funds to build its financial sustainability;
- Promote the use of independent circulation auditing to gather more robust data and thereby strengthen media markets; and
- Produce periodic reports (ideally annually) on the state of the media in Africa.

Cluster 5: Professionalism and Ethics

- Develop tools and mechanisms to monitor the status of implementation of norms, standards and best practices related to ownership, editorial independence and public-interest journalism;
- Ensure that regional norms and standards on professionalism and ethics in the African media are widely disseminated and respected across the board;
- Establish and encourage professional

networks (such as the African Economics Editors Network - AEEN) and regional forums, (such as the Festival des Ondes de Bamako and Highway Africa) to strengthen the media practices in Africa;

- Establish an African Media Award to showcase and reward outstanding media practice, entrepreneurship, innovation and public-interest journalism;
- Develop mechanisms to strengthen and organize the demand for better wages and working conditions, for example in francophone Africa, by exploring ways of bolstering and ensuring respect for national and subregional legal codes that guarantee minimum working conditions for media practitioners;
- Promote fair and equitable working conditions for women in the African media, and advocate for an end to sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based discrimination;
- Support the efforts of civil society organizations to monitor and regularly assess media performance, especially during public elections and in promotion of human rights and democracy.

Cluster 6: Content

- Ensure respect for and promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity, in par-

ticular the use of local languages and gender balance in Africa's media;

- Facilitate the conducting of audience surveys to determine relevant content and format;
- Strengthen awareness of media responsibility and its critical role in addressing the burning development challenges facing Africa, among others in the areas of health, governance, conflict resolution and peace building and globalization;
- Advocate for 'public interest' funds within countries and in the context of regional mechanisms and initiatives such as those of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to be allocated to media across sectors producing content in the public interest. Such funds could be modeled on the use of universal access funds created to promote the use of ICTs in rural areas;
- Ensure the production and dissemination of content that reflects the diversity of interests, the opinions and the voices of different social actors, including the marginalized; and
- Promote media use of ICTs to digitize and share content across Africa.



IV. Towards Implementation



An appropriate mechanism for implementing the recommendations that have emerged from the STREAM and AMDI processes is an African Media Development/Support Fund. The Fund should be housed and administered by an African institution based on African-identified criteria and African-led governance. The main purpose of the fund would be to administer and disburse funding to the four areas identified in the STREAM and AMDI processes.

The Fund should be managed by a dedicated team of secretariat staff who would report to a board consisting of key stakeholders representing business, media, government and civil society across the African continent.

However, the Fund has to be independent of both government and commercial interests. The continent-wide Fund would have regional agencies responsible for its administration in their various regions. These could be modeled on the Southern Africa Media Development Fund, which has been quite successful. Similar funds could be set up in other regions where they do not exist.

The Fund would have a commercial arm through which it provides financial services to various media initiatives that are otherwise difficult to access through the mainstream banks. It would also have a non-profit arm to further strengthen and assist Africa's needed media-support initiatives. Media support includes activities such as training to further develop media personnel skills and various types of advocacy for creation of an enabling environment in which the media can carry out its functions effectively and safely.

Given the convergence of the STREAM and AMDI findings, it is important that serious efforts now be undertaken to bring all stakeholders to a common platform and advance the agenda centred on the most viable recommendations. In order to take the process forward, it is necessary to look at the recommendations emanating from *both* the STREAM and AMDI processes. Now, it is vital that the two initiatives be consolidated into one project, to best forge African and international agreement on one consolidated plan.

Nevertheless, the guiding principle of a new consolidated initiative for the implementation phase must be African leadership of the process. A technical team has to study both reports and all the recommendations to determine how best to implement them. The key now is to move to the next level. In log-frame terms, the strategies or actions that need to be implemented have to be identified within a very short period of time in order to keep up the momentum.

Creation of this African Media Development/Support Fund is only one of the strategies for ensuring development of Africa's media. The calls for improvement in the training of journalists also need to be heard and reflected on carefully and means and

mechanisms found for addressing the needs and gaps. In other words, specific projects have to be created in detail by technical teams. All these projects will require financing plans and budgets, and financial support required will have to be raised from donors.

Once there is consensus on the core recommendations that should be supported and by which strategies, an All Africa Stakeholders Forum could be convened to evaluate progress and achieve overall agreement about the way forward on recommendations and the projects to achieve them. Soon afterwards, a donor conference could be organized to discuss funds availability for the initiative.

Annex: Matrix of Proposed Actions to Help Develop a Sustainable and Pluralistic Media in Africa

Cluster I: Freedom of Expression and Information

Actions Required	Timeframe	Actors
Actively promote the adoption and domestication by all African governments of the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, as well as Article 9 of African Charter on Human and People's Rights, on freedom of expression.	Activities throughout 2007 and 2008 Adopted by end of 2008	Media Rights and Freedom of Expression focused-organizations to lead with support of other key stakeholders
Advocate for the adoption, ratification, domestication and implementation of all international and continental freedom of information principles, norms and standards.	Activities throughout 2007 and 2008 Adopted by end of 2008	Media Rights and Freedom of Expression-focused organizations to lead with support of other key stakeholders
Linked to the above, formulate and adopt specific laws related to access to information, whistle blowing, protection of sources, etc.	Activities throughout 2007 and 2008 Adopted by end of 2008	Media Rights and Freedom of Expression-focused organizations to lead with support of other key stakeholders
Support efforts to repeal criminal defamation and other so-called 'insult laws'.	Activities throughout 2007 and 2008 Adopted by end of 2008	Media Rights and Freedom of Expression-focused organizations to lead with support of other key stakeholders
Strengthen existing national, subregional and continental mechanisms, including media defense funds to ensure the protection of journalists and other media practitioners.	Activities throughout 2007 and 2008	African media-support organizations in partnership with international media-support organizations.
Develop an awareness-raising strategy to promote better understanding within the media itself of national media laws, to educate the media on its responsibility to provide accurate information, and to educate the public at large on its rights to information.	Activities throughout 2007 and 2008	African media-support organizations in partnership with international media-support organizations.
Sensitize lawyers and the judiciary on international and continental standards related to freedom of expression and information.	Activities throughout 2007 and 2008	African media-support organizations in partnership with international media-support organizations.

Cluster 2: Policy and Regulation

Actions Required	Time frame/Targets	Actors
Undertake an audit of existing national laws and policies to identify poor regulation (such as incoherence between media laws and national constitutions) and promote the design and implementation of policies and legal frameworks that enable, rather than stifle, the growth of a strong, pluralistic and sustainable media in Africa.	Activities throughout 2007. Audit report and proposed new policies and frameworks drafted and circulated by end of first quarter of 2008	Subregional African media-support organizations
Promote legislation to mitigate the negative impacts of media concentration, promote fair competition and ensure diversity.	Activities throughout 2007	Subregional African media-support organizations
Promote good corporate governance among African media enterprises.	Activities throughout 2007	Subregional African media-support organizations
Advocate for the licensing of community broadcasters in all African countries.	Activities throughout 2007	Subregional African media-support organizations
Advocate for the transformation of state-owned media into public-service media that operates independently from the influence of the State and political parties in line with internationally recognized norms and practices (African Charter on Broadcasting).	Activities throughout 2007	Subregional African media-support organizations
Promote the establishment of legislation to ensure that convergence opportunities for media development are realized.	Activities throughout 2007	Subregional African media-support organizations

Cluster 3: Capacity-building

Actions Required	Time Frame	Actors
Undertake a comprehensive audit of existing media training in Africa, identify gaps and problems, and develop proposals to strengthen training.	Activities throughout 2008. Audit reports drafted and circulated by end of first quarter of 2008	Leading African training organizations in 5 subregions
Develop minimum standards for training of all kinds by advocating for and developing models for competency testing and academic recognition.	Draft standards ready by end of 2008	Leading African training organizations in 5 subregions
Promote the establishment of in-house training policies for media houses that promote sequential and on-going learning.	Activities throughout 2008	Leading African training organizations in 5 subregions
Advocate for and promote more on-site training as an important strategy for continuous skills building and knowledge acquisition.	Activities throughout 2008	Leading African training organizations in 5 subregions
Develop and sustain stronger links between the media industry and the media-training industry.	Activities throughout 2008	Leading African training organizations in 5 subregions
Actively promote and develop media-exchange programmes within Africa as a value-added strategy for strengthening capacity.	Activities throughout 2008	Leading African training organizations in 5 subregions
Promote the establishment of networks and associations of media owners to strengthen capacity to develop and sustain media enterprises.	Activities throughout 2007, 2008	Leading African training organizations in 5 subregions
Strengthen or where appropriate establish regional centres of excellence as a means of overcoming national media capacity-building shortfalls.	Activities throughout 2008	Leading African training organizations in 5 subregions
Establish and strengthen networks of specialized training centres and trainers to rationalize and consolidate thematic training offerings – for example on reporting HIV/AIDS, multimedia and ICTs – and promote the sharing of curricula.	Activities throughout 2008	Leading African training organizations in 5 subregions
Promote the pooling of training expertise, mentoring and resources as a means of widening access across media to cutting edge and affordable training.	Activities throughout 2008	Leading African training organizations in 5 subregions
Develop accreditation mechanisms for training centres.	Proposal by end of 2007	Leading African training organizations in 5 subregions

Cluster 4: Sustainability

Actions Required	Time Frame	Actors
Conduct a comprehensive analysis of existing media funds and facilities available to African media, whether private, public or community.	Analysis ready by end 2008	African + international media-support organizations.
Advocate for public funding to ensure the development and sustainability of community, local, small and emerging media as well as of media producing public-interest content.	Activities throughout, 2008	African + international media-support organizations
Conduct analysis of different models of media funding and co-ownership, including the SAMDEF model to inform strategies for the economic sustainability of African media.	Analysis ready by end 2008	African + international media-support organizations
Undertake comprehensive research into the community media sector in Africa, as a means of identifying its reach and scope and strengths and weaknesses. On the basis of the research findings, develop a strategy to ensure sustainable and effective community media in Africa.	Research ready by 1st st quarter 2008. Strategy by end 2008	African + international media-support organizations
Undertake a study of the conditions in African countries with regard to taxes imposed on the importation of media equipment and inputs, including newsprint. On the basis of the results of the study, advocate for the lowering or waiving of taxes on the import of media equipment and other inputs.	Study ready by first quarter 2008. Advocacy throughout 2008	African + international media-support organizations
Advocate for the removal of unfair competition from state media funded by public resources – e.g. for an end to preferential access of state media to public advertising.	Activities throughout 2008	African + international media-support organizations
Advocate for the recognition of the Media as a sector in its own right and avail investor funds to build its financial sustainability.	Activities throughout 2008	African + international media-support organizations
Promote the use of independent circulation auditing to gather more robust data and thereby strengthen media markets	Activities throughout 2008	African + international media-support organizations
Produce periodic reports (ideally annually) on the state of the media in Africa	Plan for 1 st edition by end 2008	African + international media-support organizations.

Cluster 5: Professionalism and Ethics

Actions Required	Time Frame	Actors
Develop tools and mechanisms to monitor the status of implementation of norms, standards and best practice related to ownership, editorial independence and public interest journalism.	Draft strategy by end 2008	African + international media-support organizations
Ensure that regional norms and standards on professionalism and ethics in the African media are widely disseminated and respected across the board.	Activities throughout 2008	African + international media-support organizations
Establish and encourage the development of professional networks (such as the African Economics Editors Network) and regional forums (such as the Festival des Ondes de Bamako and Highway Africa) to strengthen the practice of media in Africa.	Activities throughout 2008	African + international media-support organizations
Establish an African Media Award to showcase and reward outstanding media practice, entrepreneurship, innovation and public interest journalism.	Inaugural award end 2008	African + international media-support organizations + other partners
Develop mechanisms to strengthen organization of media practitioners in support of better wages and working conditions.	Draft strategy by end 2008	Unions + African + international media-support organizations
Where they exist (e.g. in francophone Africa), explore ways of bolstering and ensuring the respect for national and subregional legal codes that guarantee minimum working conditions for media practitioners.	Draft strategy by end 2008	Unions + African + international media-support organizations
Promote fair and equitable working conditions for women in the African media, and advocate for an end to sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based discrimination.	Activities throughout 2008	Unions + African + international media-support organizations

Cluster 6: Content

Actions Required	Time frame	Actors
Ensure the respect for and promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity as well as gender balance in Africa's media, and in particular support the use of local languages.	Activities throughout 2008	African + international media-support organizations + other partners
Facilitate the conducting of audience surveys to determine relevant content/formats etc to be formulated.	Activities throughout 2008	African + international media-support organizations + other partners
Strengthen awareness of the media's responsibility and critical role in addressing the burning development challenges facing Africa – including in health, governance, conflict and peace building, and globalization.	Activities throughout 2008	African + international media-support organizations + development agencies + other partners
Advocate for 'public interest' funds within countries and in the context of regional mechanisms and initiatives such as NEPAD and the African Union, to be allocated to media across sectors producing content in the public interest. Such funds could be modeled on universal access funds created to promote the use of ICTs in rural areas.	Activities throughout 2008	African + international media-support organizations + other partners
Ensure the production and dissemination of content that reflects the diversity of interests, the opinions and the voices of different social actors, including the marginalized.	Activities throughout 2008	African + international media-support organizations + other partners
Promote the use by media of ICT to digitize and share content across Africa.	Activities throughout 2008	