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SOUTH AFRICA

In January 2006, 12 years into democracy, the South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF) submitted a document titled "The South African Media and the Moral Agency of Individuals" to the African Peer Review Mechanism, part of a larger African Union initiative to strengthen good governance in Africa. The SANEF submission recognizes South Africa's engagement with the rest of Africa on critical issues including democratization and reinforcing the media's role as a "fourth estate." SANEF stated:

South Africa's long oppressive history has contributed to a society which values public debate even when it is acrimonious. The tradition may predate defiance of the Dutch East India Company and British colonial rulers and it has survived the coming of democracy. The foundations of our democracy were laid, and the new Constitution was framed, discussed, and endorsed by a consensus of all South African viewpoints.¹

South Africa enjoys a relatively stable political environment, but several notable events have occurred, or will soon occur, that affect the media and the key issues covered.

In mid-2007, the country experienced one of the longest industrial actions by public servants. The strike, called by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), sought a wage increase from the government. COSATU and the South African Communist Party (SACP), both traditional allies of the ruling African National Congress (ANC), criticized the ANC for pursuing economic policies that neglected the poor. Government figures show that 50 percent of South Africans live below the poverty line, and that about 25.5 percent are unemployed.²

In 2006 and 2007, the Film and Publications Amendment Bill raised heated media discussions on government attempts to bring censorship through the "back door" under the auspices of shielding minors from pornography. The Electronic and Communications Act 36 of 2005, creating a new broadcast regulatory framework, was effective as of June 2006. A new ANC leader will be elected in December 2007, with national elections to follow in 2009; if the ANC wins the national election in 2009, its leader is likely to be the next president.

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¹SANEF Submission to the African Peer Review Mechanism, January 2006, p. 5.

²US Central Intelligence Agency World Fact Book [<http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/sf.html>]

SOUTH AFRICA AT A GLANCE

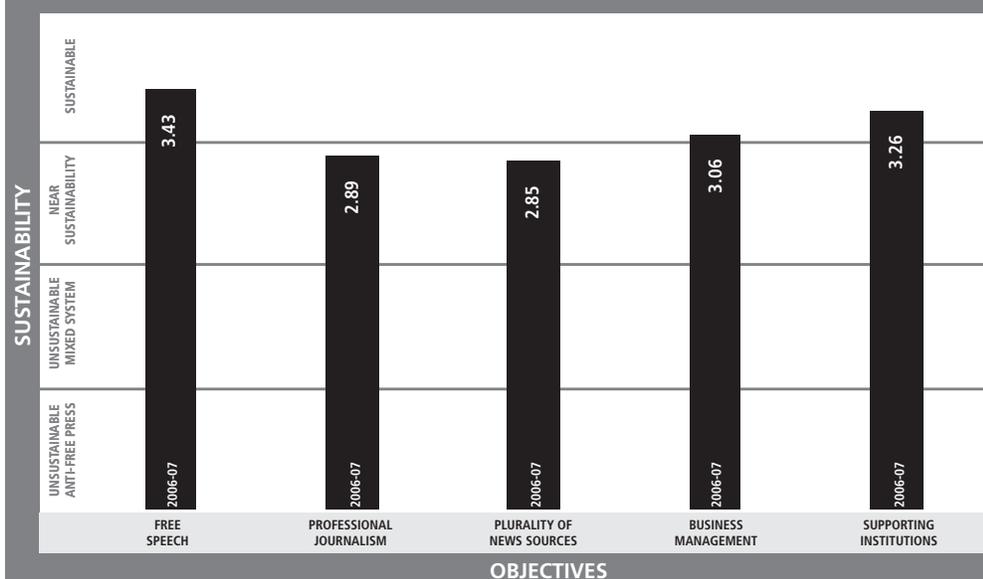
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 47.9 million (stats SA, 2007)
- > **Capital cities:** Pretoria (Administrative Capital), Cape Town (Legislative Capital), Bloemfontein (Judicial Capital)
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** black African 79%, white 9.6%, colored 8.9%, Indian/Asian 2.5% (2001 census)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Zion Christian 11.1%, Pentecostal/Charismatic 8.2%, Catholic 7.1%, Methodist 6.8%, Dutch Reformed 6.7%, Anglican 3.8%, Muslim 1.5%, other Christian 36%, other 2.3%, unspecified 1.4%, none 15.1% (2001 census)
- > **Languages (% of population):** IsiZulu 23.8%, IsiXhosa 17.6%, Afrikaans 13.3%, Sepedi 9.4%, English 8.2%, Setswana 8.2%, Sesotho 7.9%, Xitsonga 4.4%, other 7.2% (2001 census)
- > **GNI (2006-Atlas):** \$255.3 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2007)
- > **GNI per capita (2006-PPP):** \$11,710 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2007)
- > **Literacy rate:** 86.4% (male: 87%, female: 85.7%) (2003 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** President Thabo Mbeki

MEDIA SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** 24 daily newspapers (plus several other daily tabloids), 25 major weekly newspapers, over 300 community newspapers, and over 500 consumer magazines (SANEF). 13 private commercial radio stations, 92 community radio stations, and 18 public radio stations; radio is the most influential medium, with an audience of more than 91% of adults. 3 public (SABC) television channels, 1 free-to-air private television network, e.tv, 1 private subscription broadcast channel, M-Net, and 1 satellite provider, Dstv (ICASA).
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** Top 3 dailies by circulation are *Daily Sun* (500,000), *The Star* (175,000), and *The Sowetan* (140,000), all private. Top 3 weekly/weekend newspapers are *Sunday Times* (500,000), *Soccer Laduma* (320,000), and *Rapport* (320,000) (Audit Bureau of Circulation).
- > **Broadcast ratings:** Top 3 radio and television channels are all publicly owned. Radio: Ukhozi FM, Umhlobo Wenene FM, and Lesedi FM. Television: SABC 1, SABC 2, SABC 3 (AC Nielsen).
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** Print R8 billion, television R7.6 billion, radio: R2.6 billion.
- > **Internet usage:** 7.6% of total adult population (2.355 million) (SAARF 2006)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: SOUTH AFRICA



Unsustainable, Anti-Free Press (0-1):

Country does not meet or only minimally meets objectives. Government and laws actively hinder free media development, professionalism is low, and media-industry activity is minimal.

Unsustainable Mixed System (1-2):

Country minimally meets objectives, with segments of the legal system and government opposed to a free media system. Evident progress in free-press advocacy, increased professionalism, and new media businesses may be too recent to judge sustainability.

Near Sustainability (2-3):

Country has progressed in meeting multiple objectives, with legal norms, professionalism, and the business environment supportive of independent media. Advances have survived changes in government and have been codified in law and practice. However, more time may be needed to ensure that change is enduring and that increased professionalism and the media business environment are sustainable.

Sustainable (3-4):

Country has media that are considered generally professional, free, and sustainable, or to be approaching these objectives. Systems supporting independent media have survived multiple governments, economic fluctuations, and changes in public opinion or social conventions.

OBJECTIVE 1: FREE SPEECH

South Africa Objective Score: 3.43

The strong score for this indicator was led by a high ranking for the ninth indicator, which covers entry into the journalism profession. Most other indicators fell close to the average, with only Indicator 5, preferential treatment of public media, a bit behind the others.

South Africa adheres to continental and regional media protocols.³ Panelists acknowledged that the 1996 Constitution guarantees “freedom of the press and other media; freedom to receive or impart information or ideas; freedom of artistic creativity; and academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.” However, the constitution has constraints, and freedom does not extend to “...propaganda for war; incitement of imminent violence; or advocacy of hatred that is based on race, ethnicity, gender, or religion and that constitutes incitement to cause harm.”⁴

In addition to these constraints, there is another limitation: the ‘law of general application.’⁵ As SANEF pointed out, “the Constitution has also influenced the development of civil law in regard to the media and particularly the law of defamation. While previous judicial decisions sometimes leaned towards holding the media strictly liable for the publication of defamatory information, the media may now escape liability by showing they made substantial efforts to check the accuracy of their information, even if what was published was not completely accurate.”⁶

As South Africa is a new democracy with a large population that was previously disadvantaged, the population at large has yet to internalize many new freedoms, including freedom of the press. However, panelists acknowledged that the legal system allows for civil society challenges to the drafting of legislation and that the robustness of civil society allows it to effectively advocate on behalf of the public. Section 17 of the Bill of Rights covers the rights for activism and/or active engagement in civil society issues. Such rights are practiced, as demonstrated by the picket held by the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI), a media watchdog NGO, outside the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) on February 6, 2007. The FXI was calling for the public broadcaster to respond to queries about its editorial policy for news.

³African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, entered into force in 1986. SADC Protocol on Transport and Communication, The African Charter on Broadcasting (Windhoek+10 Declaration)

⁴The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, May 8, 1996: Bill of Rights: Chapter 2, Section 16.

⁵IBID, Section 36.

⁶SANEF, January 2006, ARPM Submission, p. 6.

Panelists lauded South Africa’s legislative framework but pointed out that its implementation is sometimes problematic. SANEF noted that “although the South African Constitution guarantees media freedom, free access to information held by the state, and freedom of expression, and South Africa has subscribed to a number of regional and international protocols to this effect, the performance of our ministers, politicians, and civil servants in carrying out these principles is highly variable and requires urgent corrective attention by the government.”⁷

Specifically, panelists indicated that the practice of free speech is at times undermined subtly by government officials who later claim to be acting in accord with government procedure. The Film and Publication Amendment Bill was cited as a serious attempt by the government to censor the media under the banner of combating child pornography. Panelists heavily criticized the government for attempting to tackle a real problem in a way that would lead to censorship of the media. As SANEF noted, Reporteurs sans Frontiers’ 2005 research found that compared to 167 other countries, press freedom had declined in South Africa. On the other hand, the informed debate over this issue and fact that the government did amend the bill—although it should be noted not to the satisfaction of South African media advocates—do shed a positive light on the nature of democracy in South Africa.

South Africa is now also faced with the issue of Internet regulation. The leader of the opposition Independent Democrats (ID) Patricia De Lille criticized its text messaging system and Internet blogs, saying they have the potential to allow for opportunistic attacks on children by pedophiles.⁸ FXI said that “what the ID was calling for would be a violation of Section 16 of the Constitution,” which allows people to say what they feel. FXI also argued that Internet technology aided democracy.

Furthermore, SANEF maintains that “a number of restrictive laws remain.”⁹ Despite a November 8, 1996 letter from President Nelson Mandela’s office pledging to address concerns about legislative issues impacting on media freedom, SANEF’s pleas for the government to scrap or amend these laws have been to no avail. Particularly onerous is Section 205 of the Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977, which compels journalists to reveal their sources. It “empowers the courts to imprison any person who refuses to disclose information relating to a criminal investigation.”¹⁰

⁷SANEF, January 2006, ARPM Submission, p. 9

⁸‘MXit’ is a mobile instant messaging application developed in South Africa that runs on GPRS/3G mobile phones with java support” (IOL Article: Anti-MXit DeLille accused of censorship; 26th May 2007, <http://www.iol.co.za>).

⁹SANEF, January 2006, Submission to the ARPM, p. 7

¹⁰SANEF, January 2006, Submission to the ARPM, p. 7

In 2007, however, there were a few victories confirming the existence of protection by the judiciary of freedom of expression. In a libel case against the newspaper *Beeld*, the Department of Transport sought a court injunction against the paper for printing the findings of security anomalies in a report about e-NaTIS, the government's controversial electronic traffic information system. The Department of Transport was unsuccessful, and the newspaper won. More recently, the Pretoria High Court rejected a total media ban on the trial of two foreigners, Swiss engineer Daniel Geiges and German businessman Gerhard Wisser. The two had argued that the publication of details on the trial would jeopardize national security.

Regarding broadcast regulation, the Electronic and Communications Act 36 of 2005, a new policy development, was effective as of June 2006. According to the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA),¹¹ "the Act provides a regulatory framework for the convergence of broadcasting, broadcasting signal distribution, and the telecommunications sectors. The Act also repeals the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act, and portions of the Broadcasting Act 4 of 1999"¹²

ICASA issues licenses to the broadcast media, its decisions are made public, and its processes are transparent. Charlene

LEGAL AND SOCIAL NORMS PROTECT AND PROMOTE FREE SPEECH AND ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION.

FREE-SPEECH INDICATORS:

- > Legal and social protections of free speech exist and are enforced.
- > Licensing of broadcast media is fair, competitive, and apolitical.
- > Market entry and tax structure for media are fair and comparable to other industries.
- > Crimes against journalists or media outlets are prosecuted vigorously, but occurrences of such crimes are rare.
- > State or public media do not receive preferential legal treatment, and law guarantees editorial independence.
- > Libel is a civil law issue; public officials are held to higher standards, and offended parties must prove falsity and malice.
- > Public information is easily accessible; right of access to information is equally enforced for all media and journalists.
- > Media outlets have unrestricted access to information; this is equally enforced for all media and journalists.
- > Entry into the journalism profession is free, and government imposes no licensing, restrictions, or special rights for journalists.

¹¹ ICASA is a regulatory authority, its establishment is recognised in the Constitution of South Africa, 1996

¹² <http://www.itu.int/ituweblogs/treg/Electronic+Communications+Act+2005+Promulgated+In+South+Africa.aspx>

Deacon, editor-in-chief at Kaya FM, is concerned that commercial radio stations have stringent performance levels compared to that of public broadcasters in their Promise of Performance, which are agreed upon between the ICASA and the broadcaster prior to the issuing of a broadcasting license. Other panelists disagreed with this statement and asserted that there is a difference in regulating commercial, public, and community broadcasters. The South African Broadcast System is divided into these three tiers, and according to the Broadcast Act, each has a different *modus operandi* in legislation and in regulation. However, Deacon stated that in practice, the SABC, as well as commercial broadcasters, depend on revenue earned from the commercial sector, and that this has resulted in a blurring of the distinction between their mandates.

Starting a small-, medium-, and micro-enterprise (SMME), including a media SMME, requires registration under the Companies Act of 1973. An SMME can also apply for funding from the government, provided that its business model is viable.

One question that panelists posed is whether or not Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) requirements and BEE score cards¹³ influence the market. Lumko Mtimde, CEO of the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA), added that affirmative empowerment imperatives could be a barrier to starting a media enterprise. On the other hand, a newspaper may be started with no greater restriction or tax burden than any other business. According to Gavin Stewart, an independent editorial consultant, "The major obstacle is the severity of the competition and the size and capability of the competition" among newspapers and broadcasters alike.

The panelists affirmed that crimes against journalists in South Africa are rare. Journalists are not victims of crime because of their profession, but because the rate of crime in the country is high and rising, as the most recent statistics show.¹⁴ Any attacks, the panelists said, were random criminal activities. "The editor of one of the Natal newspapers, who was shot, was just being hijacked [and] he wasn't being attacked as a journalist," said Roberta Makhambeni, one of the panelists.

However, other panelists pointed out that a journalist was held up recently in what is termed "Mama Jack High School." Other panelists said there is general intimidation, especially

¹³ "BEE Scorecard is a scorecard for the measurement of broad based black economic empowerment for a particular Enterprise, as set forth in terms of a Code of Good Practice issued under The Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Act 53 of 2004" (www.dti.org.za), December 2004, p. 50, Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Framework).

¹⁴ For the recent crime statistics see: www.saps.gov.za

of journalists working in community media, by government officials. However, panelists expressed a concern no official record or register exists for complaints received of journalists' rights being violated. The panelists attributed this to the lack of unions working on labor disputes affecting journalists.

Panelists' opinions were divided between what the law stipulates and public perceptions regarding the editorial independence of the SABC Newsroom. The editorial independence of the public broadcaster is declared to be guaranteed as evidenced in Broadcast Act No. 4 of 1999. Panelists observed that the SABC initiated an inquiry into the "blacklisting"¹⁵ of some analysts and commentators. The blacklisting report found that Dr. Snuki Zikalala, group executive of news for SABC, tends to "intervene at a micro level inappropriate to his level of management."¹⁶

Tsheliso Thipanyane, CEO of the Human Rights Commission, took a different view, saying that "we must also distinguish between the integrity of individuals in the system and the independence of the system as a whole." Amina Frense, television news editor, added that in the case of the SABC, "the newsrooms do not receive orders from Shell House, Luthuli House, or the union buildings, or general interference with day to day...news-making."

However, apparently self-censorship is an issue, with some senior editors' reportage anticipating what their superiors promote as appropriate journalism. The influence on the SABC of the huge amount of revenue generated from private business advertisements is often overlooked, and some panelists thought that this might impact on the editorial independence of the SABC.

In South Africa, libel is a civil issue and is not a criminal offense. However, Lumko Mtimde of the Media Development and Diversity Agency sympathized with public officials whose lives are made difficult by the media, and who then have to prove falsity and malice to win a libel case.

Panelists were also concerned that literacy levels constrain access to information, pointing out that the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 *itself* needs a high level of literacy to understand. They also agreed that access to information exists for those with access to resources, making socio-economic issues a barrier. Amina Frense, television news editor, noted, "Access is pretty expensive for any public person. If you're not a media practitioner, all that information

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is out there. How do I gain access to it if I'm not a journalist, just a member of the public? Access to the Internet is there, but it requires an entry level ... literacy or access to a computer, access to the Internet, to get it."

And editors among the participants said that the "juniorization"¹⁷ of newsrooms had related repercussions: most junior journalists did not always know their rights, and as a result, they might not be able to argue effectively for access to information they need.

Another issue related to this act is that some public officials may not be aware of their obligation to provide information. Panelists agreed that incompetent or ill-informed government officials pose barriers to information access.

According to Roberta Makhambeni, media liaison for the North West Legislature, information can be obtained from government, provided that the information requested is not a threat to national security. Some cases have arisen in which access to information is denied to journalists by imposing closed court proceedings on high-profile cases.

South Africa has unrestricted access to international news and news sources. Media outlets can generally afford to access these sources, but not all broadcasters can—least of all community broadcasters. Regarding media consumers, one needs to be able to afford to watch international news on the Internet or on subscription television.

There is no entry requirement into the journalism profession. Any person can study or practice as a journalist.

¹⁵The Chief Executive Officer of the South African Broadcasting Corporation Limited: Dali Mpofo appointed a Commission of Inquiry on 29 June 2006. *SABC Commission of Inquiry into Blacklisting and related matters*, Published 2006.10.14, in the Mail & Guardian Online www.mg.co.za on

¹⁶*SABC Commission of Inquiry into Blacklisting and related matters*, Published on the Mail & Guardian Online www.mg.co.za on 2006.10.14

¹⁷Term used to describe the increasing number of young reporters in South Africa's newsrooms

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

South Africa Objective Score: 2.89

All but one of the indicators fell close to the overall average, the exception being Indicator 1, related to fair, objective, and well-sourced reporting. This indicator was roughly one-third of a point lower than the average.

Reporting fairly and accurately is a contentious issue because of strict deadlines. As Charlene Deacon, editor-in-chief of a local commercial radio station, said, "Technology is indeed posing a threat to accurate reporting," given that sources of news are questionable due to the easy access of "inaccurate information via the Internet and press releases." Most panelists thought that reporting standards are good despite some inaccurate reporting, primarily by community newspapers and radio, but also sometimes in the mainstream media.

However, the panelists also felt that the standard of reporting is declining, particularly when one looks at community media. This was generally attributed to the juniorization of the profession, the absence of adequate coaching/mentoring, skills, and the lack of resources to conduct proper research and investigation into stories. A suggestion was made that older and experienced journalists in the newsroom be utilized sufficiently to mentor and coach junior journalists, in order to improve journalism in the country.

The declining standards are exemplified in a May 2007 case in which a major weekend newspaper, *City Press*, was taken to court by three powerful political figures on charges of defamation. An article titled, "ANC Top Brass Spied on Each

Other—Apartheid Agent" appeared on August 7, 2005 on the front page of *City Press*. Photographs of Premier Sibusiso Ndebele and the Minister of Defense Mosioua Lekota were accompanied by the caption: "ANC top brass." The case revolved around the claim by *City Press* that the article was based on a book titled *On South Africa's Secret Service: an Undercover Agent's Story*. Judge ZLL Tshiqi of the Johannesburg High Court said that in his view, the way the defendants had handled the matter illustrated that "the contents of the book were deliberately distorted to create sensation, which would sell the paper. And this was done with no regard for the dignity and personality attributes of the individuals concerned." According to the Judge Tshiqi, the editor of *City Press* was entrusted with ensuring the "correctness and lawfulness of the content of all *City Press* editions."¹⁸ Judge Tshiqi ruled in favor of Premier Sbu Ndebele and Minister of Defense Mosioua Lekota in the case, compelling *City Press* to pay the two parties R300,000.

In the panel discussion, Tsheliso Thipanyane, CEO of the Human Rights Commission, cited a similar incident that involved the commission and a mainstream newspaper. He said that the journalist concerned did not approach the commission for a balanced report on the story. "We said to him, 'you know this is wrong.' He said 'Well, sorry, it was not me—it was my editor who said I must write the story.' It was one of the leading newspapers in this country."

Deacon pointed out that there are many cases in which people do not respond to a journalist's inquiries in time to check information before their deadlines, even after several follow-ups by the journalist.

Another politician at the ARPM seminars held by SANEF gave an example "of the victim of an alleged rape, who was named by some newspapers while the trial was still pending." Legislation in South Africa prohibits the naming of rape survivors. However, SANEF stated, "While there have been numerous cases of debatable taste and balance and even the ethical conduct by the media since 1994, there have been very few proven cases of deliberate dishonesty, and almost none of fabricating material. In fact, the media have been quick to take action against journalists guilty of plagiarism."¹⁹

Mfanafuthi Sithebe from the Communications Workers' Union was concerned that "coverage of civil society by journalists is bad." He said that journalists give preference to business stories, saying that the awarding of gifts to journalists by corporate businesses and the hospitality sector is to blame.

JOURNALISM MEETS PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OF QUALITY.

PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM INDICATORS:

- > Reporting is fair, objective, and well sourced.
- > Journalists follow recognized and accepted ethical standards.
- > Journalists and editors do not practice self-censorship.
- > Journalists cover key events and issues.
- > Pay levels for journalists and other media professionals are sufficiently high to discourage corruption.
- > Entertainment programming does not eclipse news and information programming.
- > Technical facilities and equipment for gathering, producing, and distributing news are modern and efficient.
- > Quality niche reporting and programming exists (investigative, economics/business, local, political).

¹⁸http://home.kwazulunatal.gov.za/press_releases/14-05-2007b.pdf

¹⁹SANEF submission to the ARPM, January 2006; p. 7

Amina Frense, television news editor, concurred, saying that journalists do receive gifts, especially for tourism writing or broadcasting. Mainstream newspapers have procedures for journalists to declare such gifts, but accepting them is a personal choice, and the blame for wrongful acceptance lies with the journalists themselves.

Journalists citing women as sources increased from 17 percent in the SADC region in 2002 to 19 percent in 2005. Comparative research conducted across 76 countries has found that this is below the global average of 21 percent.²⁰ Dumisani Gandhi noted to the panelists that gender representation and use of gender-balanced sources is still lacking in all media sectors. Furthermore, he remarked that the coverage of HIV and AIDS often lacks rigorous research and perpetuates stigmas and stereotypes.

The panelists agreed that journalists generally follow ethical standards in reporting. The public broadcasters have a code of ethics for journalists. Similarly, major newspapers, including *The Star* and *Sunday Times*, have ethical codes that include acceptable practices with regards to accepting gifts and freebies. The African Media Barometer found that:

Codes of conduct and self-regulatory bodies are in place for both print and broadcast media. Print media companies have established a one-person self-regulatory body, the press ombudsman. A code of professional standards was developed by all stakeholders. Participation is voluntary but most major media houses are part of the process. There are two broadcast bodies—one statutory and one voluntary—and broadcasters have a choice. The Broadcasting Monitoring Complaints Commission is part of ICASA and headed by a judge. The Broadcasting Complaints Commission is a self-regulatory body under the National Association for Broadcasters. Both bodies have essentially the same code and similar sanctions. SABC and commercial operators being members of the National Association for Broadcasters (NAB) have opted for self-regulation, while community broadcasters come under BMCC. There is also the Advertising Standards Authority, which is self-regulatory. There is the perception that too often self-regulation is guided by self interest, i.e., that the authorities are biased towards the industry.²¹

The panelists did have some concerns regarding ethics. They said that reporters tend to write their reports first without back checking, and if they are wrong, they apologize after the fact. Panelists also felt that at times, people in power influence the newsroom. The potential undermining of journalistic ethics through bribery, especially gift giving, was another concern.

Amina Frense raised a critical issue concerning plagiarism. She insisted that this practice is not dealt with adequately by the media. SANEF stated, "The media itself has been quick to take action against journalists guilty of plagiarism."²² On the other hand, Deacon saw the issue from a different angle and suggested that technology challenges ethics. "The issue is speed of delivery of information," she said. "In terms of broadcasters, for example, you make your name on being relevant and credible based on really good journalism, but you also make your name with listeners based on how fast you deliver the information to them."

Professor Keyan Tomaselli from the University of Kwazulu Natal said that the public perceive the media as having an agenda, and that the public points this out whenever there is an inaccurate report in the media. He questioned why the public does not attribute the mistake to the journalists who wrote the incorrect report, and treat such matters as isolated cases instead of being representative of all media.

There seemed to be consensus that self-censorship does exist in various forms and at all organizational levels. Panelists said that this indicator is loaded and one needs to tread carefully, because comments can easily be based on perceptions rather than facts. Lumko Mtimde, CEO of the Media Development and Diversity Agency, remarked, "There is self-censorship, and [for me] the answer... is for us to diversify the media ownership landscape...As much as print media is largely owned by four or five groups, if their owners are not happy with a particular method, there would be...self-censorship. But if you diversify media ownership, you will get different views and opinions."

Roberta Makhambeni concurred, adding that people tend to focus mainly on the pervasive mainstream media. She pointed to recent debates regarding the SABC's editorial independence, which came under the spotlight in its Commission of Inquiry. The report claims that Snuki Zikalala's interference with the day-to-day management of the newsroom affects the independence of news editors. And this creates an atmosphere of self-censorship at the public broadcaster, especially when dealing with political stories.

²⁰ *Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS)*, conducted by Gender Links (GL) and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), 2006

²¹ MISA, *African Media Barometer (AMB)*, 2006; p. 27

²² SANEF; January 2006, Submission to the African Peer Review Mechanism, *The South African media and the moral agency of individuals*, p. 7

The issue of what constitutes a “key event” is debatable, according to panelists. They thought for the most part, key events are those that interest their target market. Events that are of national interest might not necessarily be key or relevant for community media, and key national events are not necessarily of interest to community media, who focus on local stories.

Frense commented, “We don’t have sufficient diversity in broadcasting, although we have so many outlets. There is no adequate air time to cover those key events adequately...there are more national bulletins instead of more regional and local. So we need more diversity, especially in broadcasting and especially in local television broadcasting.” Therefore, one can deduce that diversifying media organizations is crucial to adding more coverage of key events.

Panelists seemed to believe that journalists’ salaries are inadequate and cited several examples. However, according to a research report conducted by Genderlinks and SANEF in 2006, apparently salaries are market-related: “The average annual salary in newsrooms is about R210,000 per annum, with black women earning the least at R178,404 compared to white men earning R236,205 and black men earning R232,534. White women earn R189,264 on average per annum.”²³

Makhambeni stated, “An editor, if [he or she is] lucky, makes R200,000 per annum. As a director of communication, or a chief director of communication in a provincial government department, you can make R400,000 or 450,000 per annum.” Panelists noted that this salary difference is not causing corruption, but rather a shifting of journalists from the independent media to government media.

Professor Tomaselli observed, “Migration from the academic sector to journalism happened when I started teaching at Rhodes in 1981. Editors [and] assistant editors were joining the department because they could get higher salaries. The trainers of the journalists are now getting very low salaries in relation to what the journalists are getting in the corporate sector and the state sector.”

Panelists agreed that there is enough news and information programming in print and broadcast, with access to the SABC as well as subscription television which includes CNN, BBC News, Sky News, and many more. Radio stations such as Kaya FM are licensed as 40 percent talk and 60 percent music stations. There are radio stations broadcasting in indigenous languages, which cater to previously disadvantaged communities. Makhambeni affirmed that “they will break whatever [is on air] to give you the news bulletin when it is

supposed to take place. It may be shorter, but I do believe that the entertainment does not eclipse...the news.”

In terms of quality and modern equipment, South Africa is on par with the rest of the world, according to Gavin Stewart. Yet he acknowledged that the country’s “vast rural areas...remain under-equipped, under-covered and under-represented.” Makhambeni said that regional broadcasters in provinces such as North-West struggle with inadequate and inefficient equipment that at times limits their ability to cover certain areas and stories.

“The best niche—investigative reporting—comes from the financial press,” said Tomaselli. “It is process-oriented, it’s explanatory, and it addresses a reader that they assume understands what they are talking about. I think that financial journalism, for me, offers the best that journalism in South Africa can offer. And I would like to see that kind of intensity and quality spread to the other beats.”

Stewart also stated that “good journalism exists in South Africa,” although “good journalism is costly and time-consuming and reporting staffs are too small and too volatile to sustain long-term surveillance of most institutions, whether municipal councils, business, education, health, etc.”

Panelists thought that the same rigor seen in financial reporting should be applied to broad investigative journalism. Makhambeni said that tabloids also need to be seen as a rising niche in South Africa.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS SOURCES

South Africa Objective Score: 2.85

The panelists rated all indicators relatively close to the overall objective average. The lowest was Indicator 7, relating to the breadth of social interests represented in the media.

Panelists are not concerned about the availability of news sources, but are worried about the cost of access to television, both pay TV and public broadcasting. Two issues were raised with regards to print news sources. First, panelists perceived a decline of the newspaper-reading culture in South Africa. Secondly, the fact that the majority of newspapers are in English poses a barrier for some communities. And of course, panelists commented that thriving newspapers write mainly about urban issues that are not relevant to [mainly] rural non-English speaking communities.

Panelists agreed that South Africa has a multiplicity of news sources in broadcast, Internet, and print, with radio the most accessible, affordable, and linguistically diverse medium in urban and rural areas of the country. SABC television

²³ Sanef & Genderlinks, *Glass Ceiling Two: An Audit of Women and Men in South African Newsrooms*, 2007, p. 16

news accommodates a plurality of languages, including sign language, and airs a wide variety of day and evening programs and newscasts. The direct-to-home digital satellite service operates under the brand name DStv, owned by MultiChoice. It consists of well established and highly rated local and international channels, premium sports, news, and entertainment. News 24 is a 24-hour news channel available by subscription from DStv. Only consumers in higher income brackets can afford this service. Community media is growing, thanks to support from MDDA and start-up subsidies given to small media organizations.

The majority of newspapers have online editions, and other Internet-based national and international news sources are available around the clock with breaking news stories. Amongst these are I-Africa, IOL (Independent Online), All Africa, the Newspapers Directory (newspapers.co.za), News 24, Afrol News, Rap21, and Biz Community. At the moment a small percentage—7.6 percent of South Africans—are Internet users.²⁴

There are no legal limitations on citizens accessing foreign news sources, though as reported in Objective 1, panelists referred to literacy and cost constraints for rural communities.

Regarding the nature of public media, Lumko Mtimde echoed the views of panelists, saying, “There is diverse reporting that shows the political spectrum equitably, not equally, but equitably.” He explained that the profile and size of a political party’s constituency are considered for broadcast

Panelists agreed that South Africa has a multiplicity of news sources in broadcast, Internet, and print, with radio the most accessible, affordable, and linguistically diverse medium in urban and rural areas of the country. SABC television news accommodates a plurality of languages, including sign language, and airs a wide variety of day and evening programs and newscasts.

stories. “One cannot come from a one-man party and expect the same airtime in Kaya with a party that represents the entire Kaya constituency. This is what I mean by equitable reporting,” he said.

There have been complaints that the SABC favors the views of the presidency and thus of the ruling party. Last year, the SABC was criticized by the FXI for failing to account transparently to the public. FXI emphasizes that the SABC has to act on the findings of the Blacklisting Commission of Inquiry. The Inquiry investigated the conduct of Dr. Snuki Zikalala (Group Executive for News at the SABC), who was accused of attempting to silence views that are critical of the government. Dumisani Gandhi cited a report by the Media Monitoring Project that examined “whether the SABC was meeting its public mandate.” Apparently, observations showed no systematic bias on the part of the public broadcaster. Gandhi added, “So there are high professional standards in what they do.”

Roberta Makhambeni, media liaison for the North West Provincial Legislature, also referred to an incident in which the deputy president, Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka, was booed on stage by supporters of Jacob Zuma (former deputy president of South Africa and a contender in the succession race) at a rally in Kwazulu Natal. Makhambeni pointed out that when e.tv showed this footage, it was hailed for being first with the news.

The South African Press Association (SAPA) is a national, non-governmental news agency distributing consistent, reliable, and credible breaking news and photographs to the print and broadcast media. Other entrants on the market are Inet-Bridge, Eye News Service, East Cape News Agency, Touchline, Backpage Pics, and Health-e News Agency, some of which distribute news primarily on HIV/

MULTIPLE NEWS SOURCES PROVIDE CITIZENS WITH RELIABLE AND OBJECTIVE NEWS.

PLURALITY OF NEWS SOURCES INDICATORS:

- > A plurality of affordable public and private news sources (e.g., print, broadcast, Internet) exists.
- > Citizens’ access to domestic or international media is not restricted.
- > State or public media reflect the views of the entire political spectrum, are nonpartisan, and serve the public interest.
- > Independent news agencies gather and distribute news for print and broadcast media.
- > Independent broadcast media produce their own news programs.
- > Transparency of media ownership allows consumers to judge objectivity of news; media ownership is not concentrated in a few conglomerates.
- > A broad spectrum of social interests are reflected and represented in the media, including minority-language information sources.

²⁴(AMPS 2006, www.saarf.co.za) SAARF uses an adult population group: 30 903; adults of the age of 16

Apparently, private print organizations are taking advantage of the government's failure to implement legislation relating to media ownership issues and cross-media ownership guidelines, and therefore leading print media owners have interests in television as well. This situation makes it difficult for new entrants to survive in the market.

AIDS and health related matters.²⁵ While SAPA is the main supplier of international news to the media, international agencies such as Reuters and AP are also available. However, panelists are of the opinion that not enough news agencies exist for the number of media that exist in South Africa. As Charlene Deacon of Kaya FM noted earlier, news agencies are sometimes unaffordable for radio stations, and their news must be sourced from other media, for example newspapers and the Internet.

Deacon commented how Kaya FM's ability to produce its own news. "If I had to give you a percentage of original stories created by Kaya, on average [it's] roughly about two percent, maybe three," she said. "This depends on how your promise of performance goes as a radio station and how you are licensed."

Mtimde also commented that licensing conditions are different for commercial, public, and community broadcasters. He noted especially that community broadcasters frequently go out to cover newsmakers and that this is a component of their licensing. He added that their news has to be relevant to their community; hence the greater need for relevance through local stories. Commercial television station e.tv produces its own news and information programming, and, more often than not, if SABC has not covered a story, e.tv has.

Ownership of media is fairly transparent, although panelists think that a number of people still are not aware of who the media owners are. Panelists also think that ownership is monopolized, and with the few owners mainly being of European descent, there is no visible racial transformation. There are debates in the country about transforming and diversifying the media ownership landscape, an issue currently being researched by the Association of Independent Publishers. Lumko Mtimde of MDDA said, "[Media owners] will have to comply with the Electronics Communications Act,

²⁵ MISA, 2006, *African Media Barometer*.

which requires a minimum of 30 percent of all licensees to be in black hands."

Print media is dominated by Independent Newspapers Group, Media24, Johnnic Communications, and Caxton. Caxton owns the majority of community newspapers. SANEF describes the nature of the three largest companies:

The three publishing companies [Independent Newspapers Group, Media 24, and Johnnic Communications] differ widely in their ownership and character. Media24, originally Naspers and one of the foundations of Afrikaner nationalist publishing, is determined to secure a place in the mainstream of post-apartheid South Africa. It launched the Welkom Share Scheme in 1998 to bring on board 17,000 "previously disadvantaged" shareholders and it has employment equity, procurement, and mentoring policies (www.media24.com), and has recently launched several tabloids into the under-served lower middle of the consumer market, including *Son* and the phenomenally successful *Daily Sun*. Johncom, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Johnnic, describes itself as a black empowerment company committed to 'enhancing its empowerment credentials' (www.johnnic.co.za). In December 2005 Johnnic was taken over by Hosken Consolidated Investments. The third group, Independent Newspapers, is owned by Irish newspaper tycoon Tony O'Reilly's Independent Newspapers in Britain.²⁶

In 2007, Media 24/Naspers launched another black empowerment share scheme called Puthuma Nathi and Welkom Yizani to give South African citizens from previously disadvantaged backgrounds an opportunity to own shares in the company.

The SABC is by far the largest owner of radio, with commercial stations 5FM, MetroFM (both national broadcasters), and Good Hope FM (a regional station in the Western Cape). PBS radio incorporates 12 stations, broadcasting in all 11 official languages. Other commercial radio groups are: 1) Primedia, with Highveld 94.7, Talk Radio 702, Kaya FM, KFM, and Cape Talk; 2) Radmark, a radio sales and buying house representing Jacaranda and East Coast Radio; 3) United Stations, with Algoa FM and OFM; and 4) Independent, with YFM, Classic FM, P4 KZN (IGAGASI), and P4 Cape (Heart 104.9).

Apparently, private print organizations are taking advantage of the government's failure to implement legislation relating

²⁶ SANEF, January 2006, Submission to ARPM, p. 2

to media ownership issues and cross-media ownership guidelines, and therefore leading print media owners have interests in television as well. This situation makes it difficult for new entrants to survive in the market.

ICASA, due to issue new Subscription Television Licenses, has received over 10 applications and is short-listing the applicants. Presently, however, television is dominated by the SABC, the publicly owned service, with the government as sole shareholder. Appearing as the first private commercial terrestrial broadcaster in 1998, e.tv is owned by black empowerment group Hosken Consolidated Investments Limited and Venfin Limited, according to its web site.²⁷ The subscription television stations are M-Net and DStv, both owned by media conglomerate Media 24/Naspers.

South Africa recognizes 11 official languages, but they do not appear in the media as frequently as English, which is dominant. Tomaselli summarized it well, saying that “the reality of the situation in South Africa is not that the minority but the majority languages are actually disadvantaged.” One of the panelists noted that Isolezwe, a newspaper in Kwazulu Natal, is one of a few indigenous-language newspapers doing well. Most indigenous-language newspapers in South Africa tend to be small. Proficiency in the English language among some newspaper readers is also seen as a barrier. The panel discussion also highlighted the under-coverage of the rural parts of South Africa. Most media’s coverage is urban-centric, especially in the print media. Community media, however, most often distribute information in vernaculars with content that is relevant to their respective communities.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

South Africa Objective Score: 3.06

The business and management operations of the South African media sector are generally strong, and South African media and media-related companies can be found operating in several other countries in Africa. All indicators fell close to the overall average, with the score assessing the use of market research in the lead.

With community media as an exception, all media in South Africa operate efficiently and as profit-making businesses. Tomaselli mentioned ICASA closing the “open time window” for M-Net, thus ending an agreement made during apartheid that gave subscription television service M-Net what he called “an unfair advantage” over other commercial channels by allowing it to air freely for two hours per day. Other media outlets such as the SABC, Media 24, and Johncom

²⁷ <http://www.etv.co.za/>

Gavin Stewart noted, “Sponsorships by commercial companies are also used to pressure publications into giving favorable coverage of sponsor’s events, with frequent sponsor mentions. Fully sponsored events are becoming an ever-greater problem worldwide.”

are professionally managed and are profitable businesses, according to the panelists.

Charlene Deacon stated that the main source of revenue for commercial radio stations is advertising. As mentioned before, usually they compete with public broadcasters and community broadcasters for this revenue stream. The latter group has an unfair advantage, according to Deacon, because it can vary its rates. However, advertisers will opt for the services of a broadcaster that offers a competitive rate for a good service. Panelists felt that in general, the base of advertising for media is diverse, though this does not prevent interference. Gavin Stewart noted, “Sponsorships by commercial companies are also used to pressure publications into giving favorable coverage of sponsor’s events, with frequent sponsor mentions. Fully sponsored events are becoming an ever-greater problem worldwide.”

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has a sponsorship code aimed at ensuring good sponsorship practice. ASA set up the “The Sponsorship Dispute Resolution Committee and Sponsorship Appeal Committee consisting of members

INDEPENDENT MEDIA ARE WELL-MANAGED BUSINESSES, ALLOWING EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT INDICATORS:

- > Media outlets and supporting firms operate as efficient, professional, and profit-generating businesses.
- > Media receive revenue from a multitude of sources.
- > Advertising agencies and related industries support an advertising market.
- > Advertising revenue as a percentage of total revenue is in line with accepted standards at commercial outlets.
- > Independent media do not receive government subsidies.
- > Market research is used to formulate strategic plans, enhance advertising revenue, and tailor products to the needs and interests of audiences.
- > Broadcast ratings and circulation figures are reliably and independently produced.

nominated by signatories to the Sponsorship Code of Practice," and its committee has representatives from the media. According to its web site, "The Advertising Standards Authority of South Africa (ASA) is an independent body set up and paid for by the marketing communications industry to regulate advertising in the public interest through a system of self-regulation. The ASA works closely with government, statutory bodies, consumer organisations and the industry to ensure that the content of advertising meets the requirements of the Code of Advertising Practice."²⁸

The Broadcasting Act requires that license revenue be used only for the public broadcasting activities of the SABC, and this source accounts for a growing share of SABC's revenue—currently 19 percent. Direct government funding has been reduced to 1 percent. SABC generates 76 percent of its overall revenue from advertising, with SABC 1 attracting 14 percent more advertising revenue than the commercial arm, SABC 3. Panelists stated that the growing importance of commercial operations has diverted the broadcaster's priority into airing content and advertisements that appeal to the business sector's client base.

Community media thrive on government advertising but there have been cases where this is used to apply pressure on organizations reporting negatively about the government. Municipalities have also been starting up their own publications in a move to a new corporate- and market-oriented model and image, and this has also caused financial problems for community media.²⁹

Total ad spend in South Africa, excluding self promotion, was R20.1 billion in 2006, up by R3 billion or 17 percent from 2005. Of the R20.1 billion spent on advertising, print holds the highest share, at 40 percent. This includes newspapers (28 percent) and magazines (12 percent), and it amounts to just over R8 billion. Television has the second highest ad spend, with about 38 percent. Radio ranks third, attracting about 14 percent.³⁰

Regarding self-promotion, the TV sector leads all media and has invested 32 percent (R3.7 billion) in promoting their own stations on their own media. Radio follows with 16 percent

²⁸ www.asa.org.za

²⁹ Milne, C., Rau, A., Du Toit, P., and Mdlongwa, F. *Key Editorial and Business Strategies: A case study of six independent community newspapers*. Rhodes University, Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership, Grahamstown, South Africa, 2006. <http://eprints.ru.ac.za/379/>

³⁰ This information, and the subsequent breakdown by media type, is provided by AC Nielsen; Director, Janet Proudfoot. Advertising information services from the global Nielsen Company represent the most comprehensive source of competitive advertising intelligence available to the South Africa media industry. Nielsen measures advertising across seven different media types, including TV, radio, print (newspapers and magazines), outdoor, cinema, Internet, and direct mail.

(R505 million). In contrast, print only invested 4 percent (R334 million). It is clear that the battle for audiences is growing and the market is becoming fiercely competitive.

The top advertisers in South Africa keep media funded. Topping the list in 2006 was Unilever, spending a total of R442 million across all media types. Next is the cellular phone company Vodacom, while the top-spending retailer is Shoprite Checkers and the top bank is First Rand Group.

Television is a high-profile medium of South Africa, and the SABC is continually increasing its broadcast footprint. M-Net is commercially viable through subscriptions that amount to over R6 billion a year and advertising revenue derived from all platforms: SA Analogue (M-Net), SA Digital (DStv), and SA Dual View. M-Net is now owned 100 percent by Naspers. Privately-owned, free-to-air-station e.tv depends 100 percent on advertising. The top television advertisers are Unilever, Reckitt & Benckiser, Procter & Gamble, Mobile Telephone Network, Vodacom Communication, JD Group, Ford Motor Company, Coca Cola South Africa, Tiger SA, and Distell.

Radio advertising revenue in South Africa is worth R2.645 billion. Top radio advertisers in 2006 were First Rand Bank limited, Vodacom Communications, National Government, Standard Bank, MTN, Unilever, ABSA, Nedbank, Shoprite Checkers, and SAB Miller.

Print media receive the most advertising revenue in South Africa, at R8.018 billion annually. Revenue is derived both from sales of publications and advertising. However, cover prices tend to cover production and printing while advertising funds the rest of the business. Media 24 is by far the largest print media owner, with interests in many different publishing houses, and it earned R3.016 billion in 2006. The Independent Newspapers Group, publishers of most of the largest daily newspapers, is second, with revenue of R1.663 billion. Johnnic Publishing is publisher of the *Sunday Times* and earned R1.093 billion from advertising in 2006. The profitable newspapers are the more established and mainstream publications such as *The Star* and *Beeld*. *The Daily Sun*, a national tabloid, is still building its revenue base and only achieves a 36 percent premium from advertising sales. The top ten advertisers for print media are Shoprite Checkers, Pick n Pay, MTN, Vodacom, Standard Bank, ABSA, Nedbank, Spar SA, Cell C, and Mass Stores.

The advertising industry is well managed, vibrant, innovative, and internationally competitive. The industry still needs to transform its racial demographics and encourage entry by previously disadvantaged communities. Panelists agreed that the advertising market is thriving in South Africa. Tomaselli said, "The ad industry is very sophisticated, with international

agencies linked to South African [investor] equity, and many are 100 percent South African-owned.”

The ASA deals with complaints on content produced by advertising agencies and also ensures that the industry is fair and competitive. Regarding government subsidies, community media receive start-up funding from the MDDA, but the government does not subsidize any large independent media organizations.

Most large media organizations rely on market research conducted by the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF), which conducts an All Media and Product Survey (AMPS), a Radio Audience Measurement Survey (RAMS), and a Television Audience Measurement Survey (TAMS). According to the SAARF website, the foundation’s “main objective is to direct and publish media audience and product/brand research for the benefit of its stake-holders, thereby providing data for target marketing and a common currency for the buying of media space and time.”³¹ The results are presented annually, but access to this information comes at a cost.

SAARF is also working towards including community media in the research survey. SABC Television conducts its market research by augmenting the research of SAARF. Independent media also use SAARF’s AMPS. Charlene Deacon noted, however, that commercial radio stations experience difficulty in implementing and sourcing the final survey results because of resource shortages.

Regarding the influence of marketing on the print media, Tomaselli noted that editors are increasingly obliged by ownership to work with the paper’s marketing department to enhance commercial viability. This impacts on editorial independence and is hotly debated in the industry.

Broadcast ratings are produced by SAARF, and from time to time, the SABC produces audience ratings for its television programs, using standard audience research software from AGB Nielsen Media Research. The Audit Bureau of Circulation produces reliable research data on newspaper circulation in South Africa, including some community newspapers. Professor Tomaselli felt that the type of research that is missing “is reception analysis on how audiences make sense of media (soap operas, news, and dramas) and how they use media, etc. This research used to be done by Broadcasting Research at the SABC, but is now being done mainly by academics and students, [and] it is quite fragmented.” Professor Tomaselli believes that this kind of research would qualify or dispute perceptions about programming in the public broadcaster and other broadcasters.

³¹www.saarf.co.za.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

South Africa Objective Score: 3.26

In this objective, panelists returned scores of above 3 for all indicators, though none were significantly higher than the overall average.

Bodies representing the broad and common interests of media houses and individuals are SANEF, Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), Print Media South Africa, and the NAB. The NAB is an NGO funded by its members that engages with policy makers and provides ICASA, the government, and parliament with information and updates on the broadcast industry. For example, the NAB made a submission on the proposed amendments to the Film and Publications Act to the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs in 2003. Professionals in the media form the core of these organizations, which are particularly active on issues of media freedom and freedom of expression.

The Association of Independent Publishers (AIP) seeks to grow small community and grassroots newspapers. The National Community Radio Forum is a platform for advocacy, lobbying, and networking for community radio stakeholders.

As mentioned earlier, no unions represent the interest of all journalists. Gavin Stewart had this to say about the demise of unions in South Africa: “Journalists believed they could gain great strength by opening the doors of their union to everyone in media post-1994. They failed to foresee that few non-journalists would join and they would fall below the ratio required for recognition as a union. Their employers promptly withdrew recognition. Their [employers’] delight (I was among them at the time) told me how grave a mistake the journalists had made.”

SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS FUNCTION IN THE PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA.

SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS INDICATORS:

- > Trade associations represent the interests of private media owners and provide member services.
- > Professional associations work to protect journalists’ rights.
- > NGOs support free speech and independent media.
- > Quality journalism degree programs that provide substantial practical experience exist.
- > Short-term training and in-service training programs allow journalists to upgrade skills or acquire new skills.
- > Sources of newsprint and printing facilities are in private hands, apolitical, and unrestricted.
- > Channels of media distribution (kiosks, transmitters, Internet) are private, apolitical, and unrestricted.

The Communications Workers' Union represents the interests of large communication companies and parastatals [semi-government owned organizations] such as Vodacom and Telkom, but it is not a *journalists'* union. SANEF represents the interests of editors, but is not a union. Panelists generally seem to believe that the revival of a *journalists'* union is a priority because there is an absence of representation for journalists.

Longstanding media NGOs such FXI, MISA, and SANEF monitor, advocate, and lobby for freedom of expression and media advancement. The MDDA, as a government-run agency, supports the start-up and development of community and small media. FXI is an NGO at the forefront of advocacy, education, and mobilization of civil society involvement in media issues and lobbying for media freedom and freedom of expression in South Africa. The institute is a member of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange, a global monitor of media freedom and freedom of expression. FXI and other NGOs such as MISA and SANEF are city-based national organizations. Dumisani Gandhi from Genderlinks said, "There is no doubt that there are organizations but there is need for more activism."

However, Gavin Stewart felt that the NGO sector is good and resourceful. "Among other things, these NGOs have found everything from sound legal opinions to cash for legal actions," he said.

Panelists generally perceive existing NGOs as effective, although they believe that more such organizations should exist in order to create greater understanding on the need for media freedom and freedom of expression. These organizations can also help the public to understand the roles and purposes of media in society.

Rhodes University, the University of the Witwatersrand, Stellenbosch University, and the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University offer well developed, high quality journalism degrees that contribute to the high standard of journalism in the country. The extent of their practical training, however, was debated by the panelists, many of whom said that degree programs are lacking such training.

Some South African journalism students study abroad, although Tomaselli said, "It is prohibitively expensive. Journalists get their degrees in South Africa and most graduates are absorbed by the non-news sectors [of the broader communications industry]." Stewart asserted, "Good candidates from the formerly disadvantaged groups are in short supply, largely due to a failing school system in these areas."

Numerous complementary short-term training programs are offered at organizations such as the Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership, Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, Genderlinks, and the National Media Electronic Institute. The Sol Plaatje Institute provides training for media managers and leaders. The Institute for the Advancement of Journalism offers short training courses for individual journalists and members of the government, corporate, and NGO sectors. Genderlinks approaches training differently, using training tools from the virtual resource center on their website. Panelists noted that journalists are busy people and it is difficult for them to take time off to go for week-long training programs, a statement supported by recent research into training needs across the SADC region.³²

Panelists also mentioned the issue of access to, and funding for, training. Roberta Makhambeni commented, "It is accessible but it seems to be in large cities, metropolitan areas....[If] those same institutions are willing to travel to us, [then] we can pay for one person instead of paying for five people. People can't travel to Johannesburg, pay for accommodation for a week and pay for the course, unless they are subsidized." Most panelists agreed, especially on the need for trainers to travel to organizations to do in-house training.

Newsprint in South Africa is mainly in private hands, and as Lumko Mtimde remarked, "printing facilities are commercially driven and owned for profit making, and serve the newspaper industry." Mondi Shanduka is a major player in newsprint in South Africa and provides newsprint for publishing to Independent Newspapers, Media 24, and Johnnic Communications. SAPPI is another major paper company that is entering the newsprint market.

Community newspapers have difficulty accessing standard newsprint because it is expensive, and Mondi Shanduka does not provide to community media, as this sector is unable to afford it. Stewart said, "There is something of a monopoly of ownership by Caxton of web-fed tabloid presses. Caxton is the major publisher of community newspapers and its smaller rivals can no longer obtain sheet newsprint."

"Most print media are in private hands," said Tomaselli. "Broadcast transmitters are divided between private and state. Nonetheless, a few media distributors are in state hands, including the SABC, and very few local government publications."

³²Milne, du Toit, Rau & Mdlongwa, 2006, Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership

Panel Participants

Tseliso Thipanyane, CEO, South African Human Rights Commission, Johannesburg

Roberta Makhambeni, media liaison, North-West Provincial Legislature, North-West Province

Lumko Mtimde, CEO, Media Development and Diversity Agency, Johannesburg

Mfanafuthi Sithebe, trade unionist, Communications Workers Union, Johannesburg

Amina Frense, news editor, South African Broadcasting Corporation, Pretoria

Dumisani Gandhi, program manager, Genderlinks, Johannesburg

Dumisani Nyalunga, media and advocacy officer, Media Institute of Southern Africa-South Africa Chapter, Johannesburg

Charlene Deacon, editor-in-chief, KayaFM, Johannesburg

Keyan Tomaselli, senior professor, University of Kwazulu Natal, Kwazulu Natal

Gavin Stewart, independent editorial consultant, East London

Moderator

Shehnaaz Bulbulia, print department head, Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, Johannesburg

Observers

David Katz, project coordinator, Association of Independent Publishers, Johannesburg

Johanna Mavhungu, researcher, Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership, Grahamstown.

The South Africa study was coordinated by, and conducted in partnership with, the Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership, Rhodes University, Grahamstown.

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