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CÔTE D'IVOIRE

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Since the signing of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement in March 2007 by the two parties to the armed conflict, Côte d'Ivoire has been relatively calm.

The unity government that arose out of the agreement has been in operation since April 7, 2007. In the context of the Ivoirian media, the new minister of communication, Ibrahim Sy Savané, has endeavored to finalize the implementation of the 2004 legislation, which provided the legal regime for the printed press, radio, and television. Various legislation has been passed toward that end. The legislation in question was in the form of decrees on the organization and operation of the National Press Council, the joint Press Identity Card Committee, and the Press Support and Development Fund.

The Press Identity Card Committee, which had been officially set up toward the end of 2007, had not even made a start on its work during 2008. Not one card had been issued. Only in January 2009 had it started to issue any cards. It has nevertheless succeeded in examining more than 400 applications so far.

A study commissioned by the Ministry of Communication on Ivoirian radio and television had laid the foundation for an opening up of the domestic radio and television scene. In its conclusion, the study, which was carried out by the French consultancy Media Consulting Group, suggested that deregulation would be prudent if the objectives of increasing diversity in what appeared on television, enhancing public debate by creating new forums for active citizenship, and establishing conditions for the development of a national program production industry were to be met.

For the time being, that segment of the media has been only partially deregulated. It comprises public stations (two radio and two television), two private radio stations (Jam, Nostalgie), one scrambled television channel (Canal-Horizon), and some 50 local radio stations.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE AT A GLANCE

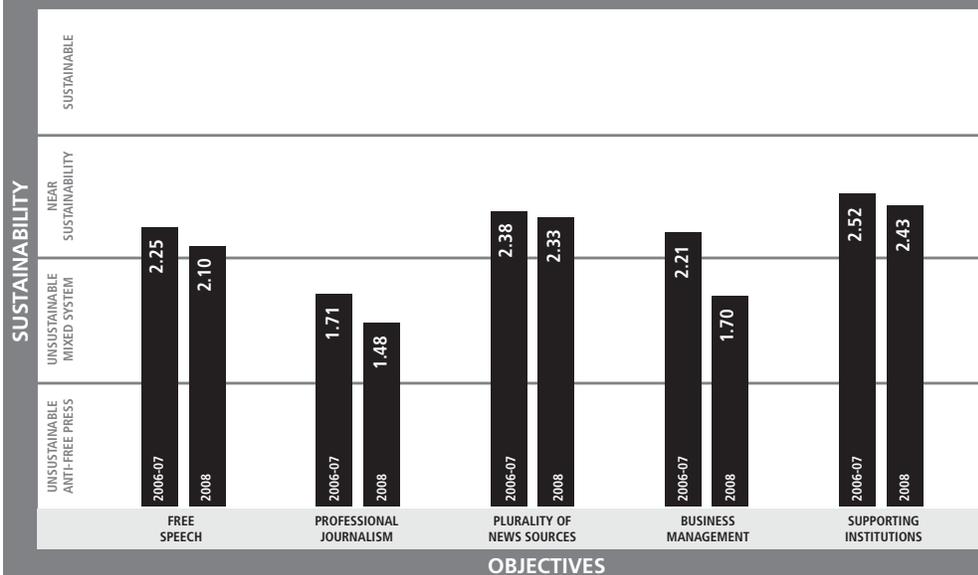
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 20,179,602 (July 2008 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Yamoussoukro
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Akan 42.1%, Voltaiques or Gur 17.6%, Northern Mandes 16.5%, Krous 11%, Southern Mandes 10%, other 2.8% (1998 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Muslim 38.6%, Christian 32.8%, indigenous 11.9%, none 16.7% (2008 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages (% of population):** French (official), 60 native dialects with Dioula the most widely spoken (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2007-Atlas):** \$17.54 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2008)
- > **GNI per capita (2007-PPP):** \$1,590 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2008)
- > **Literacy rate:** 48.7% (male 60.8%, female 38.6%) (2000 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** President Laurent Gbagbo (since October 26, 2000)

MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** Print: 22 daily newspapers, 58 others, 8 periodicals; Radio: N/A; Television stations: N/A (Source: National Council of the Press)
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** Top three by circulation: *Fraternité Matin* (6,824,333 2006 circulation in 2006), *Soir Info* (4,904,498 circulation in 2006), *Le Nouveau Réveil* (3,733,010 circulation in 2006)
- > **Broadcast ratings:** N/A
- > **News agencies:** Ivorian Press Agency (state-owned)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** N/A
- > **Internet usage:** 300,000 (2006 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: CÔTE D'IVOIRE



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: FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Côte d'Ivoire Objective Score: 2.10

The panelists were unanimous in recognizing that the legal and regulatory instruments that formed the basis for freedom of speech were indeed in existence in Côte d'Ivoire. In addition to the constitution, Law 2004-643 of December 14, 2004, on the legal regime for the press and Law 2004-644 of the same date on radio and television media, in the words of the panelists, "affirmed" that freedom. Freedom of speech was much easier to see in the printed press, which benefited from a more hands-off regulatory regime.

Abdoulaye Sangaré, a press publisher and chairman of the board of the Publishers Association (GEPCI), said that even though the new press law had imposed restrictions in terms of business creation that went beyond the conditions demanded of other sectors of the economy, and however justified or well founded they were, it was nevertheless true that those restrictions did exist.

Gérard Dogbemin, a lawyer, expressed the view that on the other hand the freedoms extended to the press were not subject to excessive fiscal pressure, as the press was treated as a commercial enterprise but nevertheless benefited from an exemption on inputs such as paper.

Josette Barry, a journalist, highlighted the situation of financial insecurity in which most Ivorian papers were developing. It was easy to see how the press was getting on in the market, but quite a few could not manage to climb into the black. However, they could do so, in her opinion, if they were relieved of fiscal pressure. There needed to be a movement toward tax relief for press enterprises. In other words, the companies in the sector should be allowed to benefit from tax holidays, like some local enterprises.

Charles Sanga, a newspaper director, noted that the "advertising levy," which was charged on all advertisements, went into the Press Support and Development Fund.

Even though various approaches to deregulation were being looked at for television, the radio and television sector was still subject to the grant of concessions. The National Television and Radio Media Council, an independent administrative body, is responsible for regulating the sector. The National Press Council regulates the printed press. Another professional organization, the Press Freedom, Ethics and Professional Standards Observatory (OLPED) had the purview of self-regulation by the Ivorian media.

In 2008, four editorial offices were the targets of acts of vandalism; journalists were harassed and offices wrecked by

individuals. The panelists deplored the fact that those acts of vandalism against the media and people in the sector had not been energetically followed up. The Press Council also picked up a dozen or so cases of obstructing the exercise of press freedom of which journalists and press companies had been victims. They concerned, among other things, access to sources, and intimidation and threats by both individuals and elements in the police forces.

On access to sources, the panelists noted some special features for sources of domestic news. Apart from communiqués from the Council of Ministers, authorities give journalists only what they want Ivorians to know. When journalists go to a ministry to obtain information, the first thing that is looked at is the "color" of the journalist's newspaper, and then either they talk or they do not. Some public institutions are off limits to some journalists, for example. In short, access to public information is used as a source of discrimination.

Access to information from the private or international sectors is more freely and openly accessible to all players. A half dozen or so operators offer Internet access at relatively attractive rates. The number of "cybercenters" is constantly increasing throughout the country, and more particularly in Abidjan. Various unlimited-access broadband packages are available.

Access to the journalism profession is freely available and open to young people as long as they meet the conditions set by law, which define a professional journalist as any physical person with a higher diploma from a professional journalism school,

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.

failing which, with a higher-education degree coupled with two years' professional training. In addition, the qualification has to be backed up by a principal, regular, and remunerated occupation in researching, gathering, selecting, using, and presenting news information in one or more press companies.

A professional press card issued by a national press card committee is sufficient proof that a person is a journalist. After 10 years of total inactivity in which not one press card has been issued, the national committee has been reactivated and new members have been designated. In January 2009, the committee began to issue new press cards.

Dogbemin regretted, however, that professional journalists who are in jobs but have no diplomas had not been taken into account in the transitional provisions.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Côte d'Ivoire Objective Score: 1.48

Most of the panelists were of the opinion that the reportages that are made public are far from being fair, objective, and well documented; the scores given were generally low. The same applied for ethical and professional standards. In 1992, the journalists of Côte d'Ivoire had adopted a professional code, which, in 20 or so articles, set forth the rights and duties of journalists working there. OLPED was doing its best to promote the code, but it was in fact clear from its own statistics that the great majority of journalists do not attach much importance to the rules that they had voluntarily set for themselves.

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).

In 2007, four dailies (*Le Patriote*, *Soir Info*, *Le Nouveau Réveil*, and *Matin d'Abidjan*) had trouble from the civil and armed police or in the courts.

Also in 2007, the National Press Council had to impose 90 penalties on 28 press organs, including 18 dailies, for professional misconduct. There were fewer reprimands, though, than in 2006—45 compared with 106.

In 2008, four editorial offices were called up for questioning by the armed police investigation squad in the context of investigations following the publication of articles. Three were summoned to appear in court.

Relative to 2007, editorial practice turned up a fair number of breaches of the professional rules. In addition to 57 summonses to appear for questioning and 14 formal notices, for 2008 the Press Council issued 60 warnings and 57 reprimands. The breaches that were picked up had essentially to do with defamation, failure to respect people's private lives, refusals to publish rights of reply, or insulting the head of state or foreign heads of state. The annual Press Council report said that with 2008 being an electoral year that had seen the electoral campaign and presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire, the papers that were close to the political parties, particularly the dailies, had let themselves be swept off their feet by election fever and had committed many violations.

Even though it had the power to suspend publications for proven serious misdemeanors, the Press Council has so far gone no further than first-degree penalties, i.e., warnings and reprimands.

On the subject of self-censorship, Sangaré pointed out that journalists are growing up: "When one looked at breaches of ethics and professional standards, one could see that they had more to do with political and economic constraints than a lack of freedom." Self-censorship is voluntary and linked to political or economic ties. Journalists might self-censor when they find themselves up against political or party interests.

An analysis of Ivoirian media content highlights the clear preponderance of the political over matters concerning society or of general interest. In most cases, the Ivoirian newspapers, indeed the dailies practically as one, were close to political parties or political actors. That fact was noted by the panelists as a whole.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

Côte d'Ivoire Objective Score: 2.33

A large majority of the panelists took the view that plurality of news sources is a reality in Côte d'Ivoire. People can indeed freely access news sources of their own choice. In addition to a diversity of domestic and foreign titles, people may also access foreign radio and television channels.

On December 31, 2008, 102 Ivoirian titles were to be found on the newsstands, compared with 80 in 2007, an increase of 28 percent, which actually concealed the difficulties that the players in the sector were experiencing. Thus, in 2008, even though 33 new publications had appeared, another 30 had ceased publication. The 102 titles comprised 18 dailies (25 in 2007), 45 weeklies, and 39 monthlies and other periodicals.

Nevertheless, because of the crisis that rocked the country over the past few years, distribution of the press throughout Ivoirian territory is not yet an everyday reality. Publications arrive belatedly, more than 48 hours late in some places. Sanga, who had just returned from a mission to the north of the country, noted that because people there could not get Ivoirian radio and television, they were turning to satellite dishes so they could get international news more easily.

Barry said that what stands in people's way in accessing the media is more the economic aspects than legal barriers. Most people's standard of living and endemic poverty, which was gaining ground, are real limiting factors. No one could deny that people have to have sufficient purchasing power if they

can afford to buy newspapers or pay the subscription to a scrambled television channel.

The panelists as a whole felt that the public or state media in Côte d'Ivoire do not at all reflect the diversity of opinions and the whole political spectrum. Sanga observed that those media conflated their public-service mission, the role of the government, and often even the role of the party in power and wondered whether the public media were open to all points of view, given that they had recently heard of political parties deciding to no longer invite the public media to their activities.

While broadcast coverage of the activities of those political parties is delayed or even completely ignored, it is also true that such reactions on the part of those political factions could be considered an obstruction of access to sources of information.

Barry, a journalist with the (public) *Fraternité Matin* said that she was more worried about the attitude of journalists in the public media: "If one put oneself in those journalists' shoes, you got self-censorship, as there was no mechanism in place for the media to play the role they ought to be playing." She herself spoke of a time when at *Fraternité Matin* the paper's content was gone through with a fine-toothed comb before it was printed and the first copies off the press were dropped at the residence of the head of state at 4 a.m. However, all that is now a thing of the past. There are no more night raids on the paper. But what is being seen is self-censorship, which in her opinion occurs more because of the job than anything else. "When Mr. Journo thought about the salary he was being paid each month, he thought to himself, 'OK, perhaps I had better just put up and shut up if I want to keep my job,'" she said.

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.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Côte d'Ivoire Objective Score: 1.70

Before June 2, 2008, only 40 percent of the titles published in Côte d'Ivoire met the conditions for their existence required by law. After an awareness-raising period passed, the Press Council saw to it that the law prevailed, with a view to cleaning up the sector. Thus, on December 31, 2008, 118 titles came into the legal fold and out of the informal sector to set themselves up as genuine press businesses, including 18 dailies, 48 weeklies, and 52 monthlies and other periodicals. Even so, some of those titles stopped appearing, either temporarily or for good.

The panelists were split as to the reliability of broadcasting ratings and circulation figures. Studies are under way within the Press Council with a view to providing a structure for substantiating circulation figures for the printed press.

Circulation numbers for the daily press have been low for many years, with daily circulations per title between 4,000 and 25,000. In 2008, the total circulation was 34,246,638 (37,263,661 in 2007) for the dailies and 7,783,816 for the weeklies (7,347,457 in 2007). In 2008, total press sales were XOF 5,574,741,700 (\$12.3 million).

Francis Domo, of the National Press Council, said that from the figures it seemed that the sector is doing well on the printing and distribution side.

Sanga took the view that the number of copies put on sale is far from reflecting the economic reality of the sector. "With costs as they were, no local press business could show a trading account in the black," he said. "Costs were just too high, and without support from either the state or the private sector, how those businesses were going to dig themselves out of the hole was a mystery."

Barry noted that every single rotary press is racking up outstanding printing charges, in some cases over XOF 100 million (\$250,000). Some of those charges are never going to be recovered. She stressed that a number of factors must be taken into account. For *Fraternité Matin*, for example, it is an issue of production equipment that needs to be renewed. Fifteen years ago, *Fraternité Matin* had sales on the order of XOF 12 billion (\$21.6 million at the time). The current figure is scarcely a third of that. Since the press's heyday, the top rotary printing house has had tough competition to face.

Though press companies' revenues traditionally comes from sales of copies and advertising space, it is also true that in the current economic context those two sources are not enough to keep some publications in the kiosks. Sanga pointed out that not one local publication publishes its annual sales

figures, and so it is not out of the question that the survival of some titles is attributable to subsidies or some other kind of covert assistance.

The panelists were unanimous in recognizing that advertising is getting in the way of editorial content, though Sanga felt obliged to remind them that one had to be careful because in some cases advertising is 90 percent of total sales.

The crisis that raged in Côte d'Ivoire seriously affected the economy. Nevertheless, the cellular telephone companies, of which there are five, must compete and regularly place advertising inserts in the papers.

Nevertheless, the panelists remarked on the scantiness of advertising revenue relative to aspirations when it comes to achieving the standards normally accepted in the media sector. The appeal of television (followed by radio) aside, whether by reflex or by necessity real or imagined, some advertisers consistently turn to the *Fraternité Matin* daily, which has cornered a good part of the advertising market. In addition to legal announcements, that paper has succeeded in developing services such as obituaries and small advertisements.

Sangaré recalled that people have their established ways and customs, and then there are the institutional, governmental, and other announcements that land directly in *Fraternité Matin*. When they make announcements, even the subregional institutions such as the Economic Community of West African States and the West African Economic and Monetary Union choose the government papers in the member states. These are common practices that penalize other publications.

The Press Support and Development Fund, which had been awaited for 20 years, was finally put in place in early 2009. The fund, which is financed through a levy on advertising that had already been imposed for a number of years, was reported to amount to almost XOF 2 billion (\$4.5 million).

At the time of writing, the Press Support and Development Fund, as reviewed by the Law of 2004, had been constituted and its management structures put in place. The fund's essential missions are to facilitate the development of press or radio and television enterprises and to support the professional organizations working in the sector.

In a communiqué released once the fund was set up, the chair of GEPCI said that the fund will contribute to the restructuring and consolidation of the press sector with a view to making it an effective element for democracy and development.

Even as he reaffirmed that the fund could have a real impact on the sector by creating, for example, links into the financial system, Savané nevertheless stressed that the fund would not be able to save badly run companies.

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.

To the benefit of the companies in the sector and of eligible professional organizations, the fund is going to finance training, research and consultancy, broadcasting, development of the press and of multimedia, as well as projects in the collective interest of professional organizations. The fund is managed by a 12-member management council and an executive director. In addition to the ministers of communication, economy and finance, and culture, the management council consists of representatives of the National Press Council, the National Television and Radio Media Council, publishers, the Associations of Professional Journalists of the printed press, and the radio and television media.

The media sector suffers from a lack of market research to improve the identification of the various segments of media audiences, sales areas, and so on. Only a few media agencies have some fragmentary studies available that have been carried out for the launching of new commercial products.

No press companies have done any such market research either before launching a title or before changing editorial policy. Products are simply put on the market in the hope that readers will follow. That most likely explains why so many titles that have only just come on the market disappear as swiftly.

It was to be hoped that the Press Support and Development Fund, one of whose missions is to fund studies, would succeed in overcoming that handicap by making instruments available that would provide a real picture of the sector within the national economic fabric.

There are no statistics available on audience sizes for either radio or television stations. Point surveys are carried out to gauge the penetration of those media.

For the printed press, every quarter the Press Council publishes the number of copies made available to the public and the sales rates of each title. Sangaré pointed out that there could be no more reliable source, and it was accessible to the public.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Côte d'Ivoire Objective Score: 2.43

For a number of years, the media picture in Côte d'Ivoire has become remarkably structured. There are various professional organizations and unions trying to improve working conditions.

Following the National Union of Journalists of Côte d'Ivoire, established in 1991, a self-regulatory structure, OLPED, was formed in 1995. OLPED was the first such French-speaking structure in Africa and has served as a model for several African countries. It was stressed, however, that for

several months OLPED has been having difficulties operating, mainly because of a lack of resources.

The publishers' association GEPCI has been established for those in charge of press enterprises; the aim of the association is to enhance their businesses' credibility.

Publication directors formed themselves into a national confederation, and female journalists have two organizations: the Network of Female Journalists of Côte d'Ivoire and Women in the Media of Côte d'Ivoire. Online press presenters formed the Network of Online Press Professionals of Côte d'Ivoire.

There are three union organizations, including the National Union of Private Press Employees (SYNAPPCI), which, alongside the structures with a public media sector orientation, are actively trying to improve working conditions for people in the media sector.

After negotiations between the publishers and the union, the Collective Interprofessional Convention for the media sector was signed in February 2008 and will effectively be applied by all the companies from June 2009 on. The secretary-general of SYNAPPCI, Guillaume Gbato, said when the convention was signed that the employees, aware of the difficulties that their companies are experiencing, had agreed on a grace period of 18 months so that an environment favorable to putting the convention into effect could be created. The salaries agreed upon for journalists under the convention range from XOF 180,000 (\$425) for intern news-writers to XOF 594,000 (\$1,400) for chief editors. Photographers, proofreaders, and researchers receive between XOF 90,000 (\$212) and XOF 313,200 (\$735).

On support from civil-society organizations for freedom of speech, the panelists as a whole noted the absence of any real involvement. Barry observed that those organizations have been very active before the opposition came to power and informed the panel that she had done a great deal of work with NGOs, particularly women's organizations, that made themselves heard and who had pushed, and then suddenly it was as if they had lost their voices and nothing was heard from them; one had the impression that the same causes no longer existed, particularly those concerning women and the challenges they face.

In fact, in the face of attacks suffered by press outlets and journalists, apart from publishing communiqués, the organizations responsible for defending freedom of speech remain much more subdued.

On the existence of journalism training, locally in Abidjan there are a plethora of private schools that provide training more in media than in the profession of journalism. Sangaré said bluntly that the panel must recognize that there is no

high-quality training; in fact, not much, if any, training is available. There is only the Institute of Media Science and Technology (ISTC). Access to the ISTC is either by direct entrance examination or by professional competitive examination and is open to all.

Barry, who had recently trained interns in her newsroom, emphasized the collapse in general knowledge. Having trained more than 30 interns from local establishments, she believed there is a problem with quality. The panelists agreed that this is a general shortcoming within the national education system.

Up to the end of the 1990s, most Ivoirian journalists were trained abroad; thus, among the pioneers in the sector, there were graduates of the *École Supérieure de Journalisme* in Lille, the *Centre de Formation et de Perfectionnement des Journalistes* in Paris, the *Centre d'Études des Sciences et Techniques de l'Information* in Dakar, and the *École Supérieure des Sciences et Techniques de l'Information et de la Communication* in Yaoundé.

For more than 20 years, not one journalist has been trained abroad.

From 1995 to 2005, editorial offices benefited from training, which has borne fruit. As Sangaré observed, young university students who now have training in journalism were recruited and trained by Ivoirian professionals and now hold honorable positions in press companies, even if they are not at the wheel. In other words, a nucleus of competencies is available, although still less than sufficient. But it can be said that the in situ and seminar training model has worked; the seminars were organized with the support of development partners, NGOs, and so on.

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.

Moussa Zio, a journalist/teacher and author of a study on the subject, noted that it has taken time to put the seminars together and that in the future the goal should be to establish a teaching and training strategy steered by qualified and competent resource people who have a clear awareness of the expected objectives. They should also require the means to achieve these objectives on the basis of a strict follow-up and assessment policy whose instruments have been subjected to validation.

Nevertheless, panelists stressed that for a number of years there has been no activity in that area aimed at journalists.

Companies specializing in printing newspapers—companies with rotary presses—have declined slightly. Two printing houses that used to print their own titles (*Le Jour Plus* and *Patriote*) ceased operations, and both dailies are subcontracting their printing. Of the seven rotary printers that shared the domestic market a few years ago, only four are left.

Newspapers are distributed by two Ivoirian companies, Edipresse and Côte d'Ivoire Distribution. Côte d'Ivoire Distribution's capital is entirely in Ivoirian hands and had at one point been nearly bankrupt. The Distrilibre Company, which was established in 2006, stopped operating in 2007.

Edipresse was established when the first Ivoirian daily, *Fraternité Matin*, had been created in equal partnership with the French press distribution company NMPP¹ and had a near-monopoly of press distribution. Sanga informed the panel that Edipresse told his company that they were running a deficit. Edipresse, which in its time had been set up to distribute educational texts, European papers, the only Ivoirian daily, and the only Ivoirian weekly, from 1994 on had to cope with a number of publications, many of which had unsold return rates of around 80 percent. Also, the turnover rate in national press titles said a lot about their average life expectancy.

List of Panel Participants

Josette Barry, editor-in-chief, *Fraternité Matin Éducation*, journalist, Fraternity Monitoring Group, Abidjan

Adama Koné, journalist, International Union of Francophone Press, Abidjan

Gérard Dogbemin, president, Association of Young Lawyers of West Africa, Abidjan

Francis Domo, journalist, National Commission of the Press, Abidjan

¹ *Nouvelles messageries de la presse parisienne* (New Parisian Press Shipping) distributes about 85 percent of newspapers in France.

Barthélemy Kouame, president, Online Press Network of Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan

Charles Sanga, editor-in-chief, *Le Patriote*, Abidjan

Abdoulaye Sangare, director, West Media Press Group; manager, *24 Heures*; president of the board of directors, Newspaper Publishers Association of Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan

Sylvie Naya, producer, Radio Daloa, Daloa

Saly Silué Konaté, journalist, Radio Television Ivoirienne, Abidjan

Valérie Yao Ble, magistrate, Ivorian Human Rights League, Abidjan

Jacques Silué, director, Institute of Communication Sciences & Techniques, Abidjan

Youssouf Sylla, freelance journalist, Bouaké

Dogad Dogoui, regional correspondent, Ivorian Press Agency, Abengourou

Moderator & Author

Samba Koné, chief executive officer, South Actions Media; president, Network of Self African Media, Abidjan