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*Commentators suggest that the government and the ruling party have become more critical of the media now that political competition is intensifying*



NAMIBIA

Namibia continues to be a relatively free country, with no significant changes in the constitutional or legislative frameworks governing freedom of speech and expression since last year's MSI study. The media remains unfettered generally, with a wide range of print and broadcast outlets and limited government interference. Media houses and journalists continue to operate without being subjected to overt censorship, threats of closure, or intimidation. No journalist was beaten, imprisoned, or killed during the year under review, continuing a positive trend that has existed since Namibia's independence in 1990.

Politically, the country remains stable, although the formation of a new political party, the Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP), has injected a new dynamism into electoral politics. Led by a former South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) stalwart and cabinet minister, Hidipo Hamutenya, the RDP is challenging the dominance of SWAPO in national politics.

Commentators suggest that the government and the ruling party have become more critical of the media now that political competition is intensifying. This is evident in the vigorous criticism from SWAPO organizations in a popular SMS page in *The Namibian*, which publishes readers' text messages that are often critical of the government.<sup>1</sup> Critics also suggest a likely connection between the RDP's rise and recent requests by the SWAPO (and later, the government) for a media council to "'police' media ethics and to provide a platform for the public to complain about media reports."<sup>2</sup>

Undercurrents of political division were also evident in a campaign to remove Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) Director General Bob Kandetu, who was perceived by SWAPO as being an RDP supporter, or at least not the party loyalist they wanted in the position. This campaign was spearheaded by the SWAPO newspaper, *Namibia Today*, which published a series of articles making various allegations against NBC and Kandetu in particular.

Panelists rated all of the MSI objectives within the category of near sustainability. However, almost all objective scores fell this year, and the overall score dropped from 2.90 to 2.50. The most serious losses came in Objective 1 (freedom of speech) and Objective 2 (professional journalism). Clearly, political competition and the resulting pressure revealed weaknesses in the robustness of the Namibian media sector. All objectives received scores in the middle range of "near sustainability," except Objective 2, which fell by .70 to 2.16.

<sup>1</sup> The government has continued a Cabinet-imposed ban prohibiting government departments from purchasing or advertising in this paper since December 2001.

<sup>2</sup> *The Namibian*, February 8, 2008. <http://www.namibian.com.na/2008/February/national/08E57F3EAC.html> Accessed July 30, 2008.

# NAMIBIA AT A GLANCE

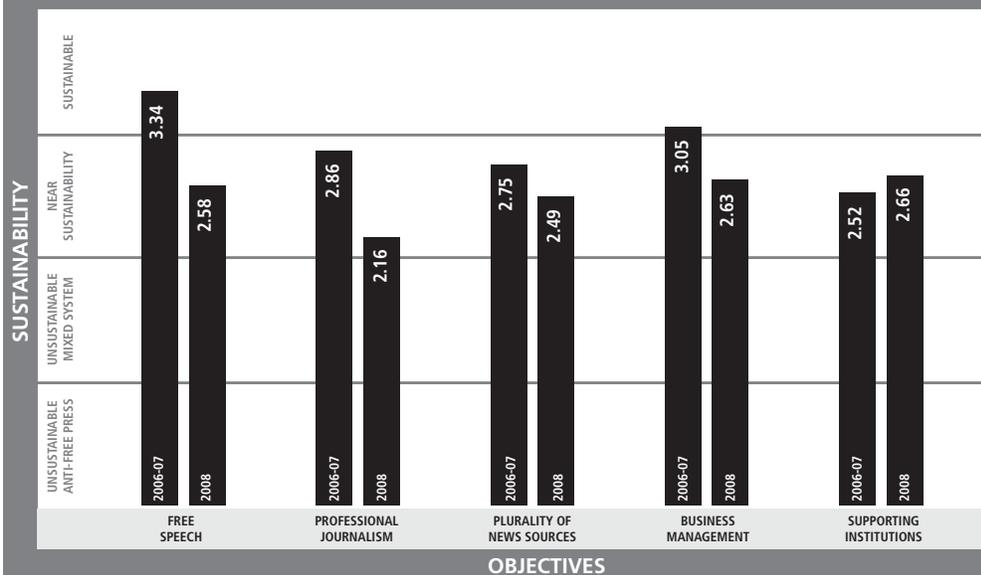
## GENERAL

- > **Population:** 2,108,665 (July 2009 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Windhoek
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** black 87.5%, white 6%, mixed 6.5%. About 50% of the population belong to the Ovambo tribe and 9% to the Kavangos tribe; other ethnic groups include Herero 7%, Damara 7%, Nama 5%, Caprivian 4%, Bushmen 3%, Baster 2%, Tswana 0.5% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Christian 80% to 90% (Lutheran 50% at least), indigenous beliefs 10% to 20% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages (% of population):** English 7% (official), Afrikaans common language of most of the population and about 60% of the white population, German 32%, indigenous languages 1% (includes Oshivambo, Herero, Nama) (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2008-Atlas):** \$8.880 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2009)
- > **GNI per capita (2008-PPP):** \$6,270 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2009)
- > **Literacy rate:** 85% (male 86.8%, female 83.5%) (2001 census, *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** President Hifikepunye Pohamba (since March 21, 2005)

## MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** Print: 13 newspapers, including 4 daily; Radio Stations: 29; Television Stations: 3
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** Top two by circulation: *The Namibian* (25,900 daily), *Informanté* (70,000 weekly) (Source: Christof Maletsky, News Editor, *The Namibian*)
- > **Broadcast ratings:** Top three radio stations: National Radio (85%), Radio Energy (25%), Oshiwambo (42.8%) (AC Nielsen Namibia 2001)
- > **News agencies:** Namibia Press Agency (NAMPA)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** Approximately \$20 million
- > **Internet usage:** 101,000 (2007 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

### MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: NAMIBIA



#### 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

### Namibia Objective Score: 2.58

All indicators received lower scores this year—except for Indicator 8 (media access to international news sources)—resulting in a large fall in score from 3.34 last year to 2.58. Most of the indicators stayed within a half-point of the overall objective score. The exceptions are Indicators 8 and 9 (free access to the journalism profession), both of which scored well above the overall score, and Indicators 5 (editorial independence of public media is guaranteed) and 7 (access to public information) both scored about three-quarters of a point lower.

Despite the lack of legislative changes that might threaten press freedom, panelists expressed particular concern about government proposals regarding the possible establishment of a statutory media council to regulate media ethics. Overall there seems to be a sense that the government is losing any inhibitions it might have had about trying to control information and news. The incidents described above, coupled with a bill considered by parliament—the Information and Communication Bill, which would provide for interception of electronic communications by the government—put in doubt the government’s commitment to a free speech and free press environment in Namibia.

Panelists also noted that a major inhibitor for free speech stems from rural culture and tradition, which often has a mitigating impact on freedom of expression. Selma Shipanga, a student intern at the Media Institute of Southern Africa’s (MISA) Namibia chapter, observed that in rural areas in particular, “tradition becomes a barrier to people being able to speak out on issues of the day.” The tightly controlled nature of rural communities often sees individuality and free thinking subjugated to the demands of the community as a whole. The traditions regarding women in particular often leave them in a vulnerable position and unable to express themselves freely in public.

The panelists were also outspoken against the government’s influence over the broadcast spectrum. They suggested that the state-appointed Namibia Communications Commission (NCC), the body that licenses and regulates the electronic media, might not be executing its duties fairly. Even the terms “community,” “commercial,” and “public” are not explicitly defined, contributing to a lack of transparency in the license application process.

Andre Engelbrecht, director of the coastal community radio station Ocean Wave, said that it seems as if the commission “gives licenses to the highest bidder” and that commercial

stations, which pay higher license fees, are given preference over community stations. Mathew Haikali, director of the MISA-Namibia chapter, agreed: “The licensing of media is not about issues anymore—merely about individual members. In other words, who brings in the most money. Political clout also helps.”

Aside from licensing issues, no barriers prevent media companies from entering the market. However, no measures have been taken to encourage the rise of a plurality of media voices, panelists said. No tax or financial incentives are provided to promote media; newsprint, electronic equipment, and computers are still charged full import duties as well as a sales tax. Some of the empowering telecommunications tools that can serve to bridge the digital divide (e.g., pre-paid cell phone recharging) are now “taxable items.” After taxes, customers recharging their airtime packages with NAD \$10.00 (\$1.25) received only NAD \$8.45 (\$1.04) in airtime.

The market also appears to be relatively friendly to international entrants. Panelists noted a growing South African domination of the media, including South African shareholdings of one of only two independent television stations in the country (One Africa Television and TBN, a Christian station), and major newspapers and radio stations. Panelists did not necessarily view the emergence of international competition as being negative, however, and noted that these companies are expanding citizens’ choices. For example, the introduction of a daily television news

## 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.

*Namibia continues to be a safe country for media professionals to practice their profession. Panelists said that there were few reported incidents of crimes against journalists.*

bulletin on One Africa Television now provides citizens with an alternative to NBC news.

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However, panelists noted that constitutional and legal confusion persists regarding the exact role of government in media regulation and ownership. Through annual funding and government-appointed boards of directors, the state essentially owns and controls a major newspaper (*New Era*), the country's only news agency (Namibia Press Agency, or NAMPA), and NBC.

There are also continued concerns regarding libel laws in Namibia. Panelists felt that these were particularly onerous for investigative journalists, who are frequently exposed to civil defamation cases. Threats of lawsuits were also particularly restrictive for freelance reporters, who have little or no legal protection. In 2007, four lawsuits were filed against Namibian Journalist of the Year award winner John Grobler; one against *The Namibian* by former President Nujoma, for quoting testimony in a court hearing that referred to him as being "corrupt"; and one by Windhoek Mayor Mathew Shikongo against *Informanté*, for refusing to disclose a source that provided the paper with information about a land deal.

Panelists noted that the absence of legislation regarding access to information results in journalists frequently struggling to obtain even the most basic public information. Annual reports, for instance, are often unavailable or published very late. (The exception is the budget of the Ministry of Finance, which is readily available.) Panelists also noted that access to other forms of information varied depending on the size and influence of the media house. Smaller community radio stations are often neglected by government officials and ministers who were frequently willing to appear on national programs. There was also discussion regarding press invitations, often sent (perhaps on purpose) far too late, giving journalists no time to prepare or conduct research on the stories that they are being asked to cover.

Namibian journalists are not required to obtain accreditation in order to practice. However, panelists expressed concern that foreign nationals do need accreditation. No foreign journalist has been refused permission, but that the application process can be cumbersome, they said.

## OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

### Namibia Objective Score: 2.16

Like Objective 1, panelists returned scores for Objective 2 that were much lower than last year: this objective's score fell from 2.86 to 2.16. All indicators suffered significant drops, in particular Indicator 5 (pay levels for journalists). All indicators received scores near the final objective score, except for Indicator 2 (journalism ethics), which scored slightly more than half a point higher.

Panelists said that reporting is sometimes one-sided and lacks balance. Journalists also tend to be overly reliant on a handful of sources, which limits the range of views represented in the media.

Self-censorship does happen in some media houses, panelists said, with journalists deliberately avoiding covering issues that might offend political leaders—particularly those from the ruling party. However, they suggested that self-censorship might relate more to journalists' fears of being cut off from news sources, rather than as a result of overt bias or threats. "They [the politicians] generally expect a positive interview. When you ask negative questions, they might break off the relationship, and you will find it difficult to interview them in future," said panelist Borrundu Ngula, Katutura Community Radio news director.

For the most part, journalists do follow recognized and accepted ethical standards, but the standards are not entrenched formally. Haikali noted that while MISA-Namibia has produced a code of ethics, none of the media houses have responded to the latest draft. "Most say that they conform to international standards. They use the code but don't want to acknowledge that they use it," he said. Community media are generally unaware of the existence of the code.

Citing the example of a local cell phone company giving journalists free handsets at a corporate launch, panelists noted that bribery practices continue unabated.<sup>3</sup> Panelists also expressed concern over the sponsorship of news programs on some stations and argued that this practice placed pressure on stations to cover sponsors' activities positively.

<sup>3</sup> Notably, the panel itself was divided on whether the example cited represented a case of outright bribery.

Panelists agreed that media houses do acknowledge mistakes when they occur and take the necessary action in terms of publishing apologies and corrections.

Explaining concerns about a lack of professionalism, panelists said that many journalists were veterans who learned their trade on the job without receiving any formal education in the profession. This was partly due to the fact that, before independence, no black journalist would have been given the opportunity to train in journalism at an institution of higher learning, and even white journalists found few institutions (none within Namibia) that could offer them such training.

Panelists said that many new journalists are being lured away from the profession by more lucrative job offers. "Students see media studies as a stepping stone to the world of public relations," said media activist Upi Ngamane from Gender and Media Southern Africa.

Panelists' views were mixed on whether pay scales are adequate to discourage corruption. They noted that substantial variations exist among institutions and among media sectors. Media practitioners in the public and commercial media sectors are "adequately paid," panelist Manfred Issacks said. However, in the community media sector salaries are either low, or else journalists are volunteers. "Extra work becomes the only way to survive as a journalist," said panelist Maureen Tatire, a Katutura Community Radio volunteer. "It is easy to bribe community radio staff because of their low salaries."

Even on commercial radio stations, some presenters might receive as little as NAD \$20 (\$2.50) per hour. Senior producers and managers at commercial stations or the NBC are comparatively well paid and receive generous benefits

#### 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).

*"They [the politicians] generally expect a positive interview. When you ask negative questions, they might break off the relationship, and you will find it difficult to interview them in future," said panelist Borrundu Ngula, Katutura Community Radio news director.*

that include housing allowances, pension plans, and medical coverage.

Regarding whether entertainment programming eclipses news and information, panelists noted that commercial pressure caused the state broadcaster to drop its afternoon prime-time current-affairs program (*Update Namibia*) in favor of a hip-hop music program presented by a young up-and-coming DJ. Panelists also observed that the donor community, which funds programs on some community radio stations, can have a positive impact. These sponsorships encourage stations to produce informational and educational programs in addition to those focusing primarily on entertainment. Ngamane said he believes that the media have a role to uplift and challenge their audience. "People don't want to think," he said. And Engelbrecht said that, rather than pushing listeners away, local content and local news can actually be a draw and prevent people from changing the channel.

Although commercial and state media are generally well equipped, maintenance of technical equipment remains an issue for sustainability. Panelists cited the problems that one newspaper experienced with its printing press, which could be repaired only by experts who had to be flown in from Europe. Equipment remains a stumbling block for small community stations. "Equipment is in short supply, and it is difficult to obtain access to transportation, so these are barriers for us in getting local news," Ngula said.

#### OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

##### Namibia Objective Score: 2.49

The score for this objective fell modestly, due primarily to lower scores in three indicators: Indicator 2 (citizen access to media), Indicator 6 (transparency of media ownership), and Indicator 7 (coverage of minority affairs). However, Indicator 4 (news agencies) improved its score notably. No indicator scored more than a half-point higher or lower than the overall objective score, however.

*But according to Kawana, “NBC local language services in the rural areas are doing a marvelous job” because they provide coverage of local and community events and a vital means of communication in the local language for isolated villages.*

News access varies considerably across the country, with a gulf continuing to exist between the urban rich and rural poor. Coverage of rural issues tends to be very limited, and people in these areas are largely reliant on NBC news and newspapers that often arrive a day or two after publication. In Katima Mulilo, for instance, there is access only to NBC Radio, the ZNBC (from Zambia), and One Africa Television. But according to Kawana, “NBC local language services in the rural areas are doing a marvelous job” because they provide coverage of local and community events and a vital means of communication in the local language for isolated villages.

Internet access in rural areas is prohibitively expensive for many, but an empowering technology is the use of the SMS service using mobile phones. Radio stations and *The Namibian* newspaper have been making good use of this technology to stay in touch with audiences and to give citizens a voice.

There is no government restriction on the viewing of any international channels. For those who can afford the service, the subscription-based satellite broadcaster DSTV offers a sizeable number of television and radio channels, including BBC, Sky News, CNN, Voice of America, and Al-Jazeera. The package costs nearly NAD \$500 (\$40) per month, plus the additional cost for a satellite dish and decoder, and is beyond the means of many Namibians. However, new competition from the British company GTV, which took over the media rights for UK soccer matches from DSTV, has introduced cheaper packages. The lowest-priced package for DSTV is now a mere NAD \$17 (\$2.20) a month.

State media such as the NBC tend to concentrate on government activities, with the president, prime minister, and ministers taking up a large slice of the time in each news bulletin. According to Ngamane, NBC does criticize government sometimes, “but in a rather lame way.”

Opposition parties do not get sufficient coverage on the NBC, panelists said. They also questioned whether the NBC could ever be really independent as long as the board is appointed by a government minister. But they said that NBC does serve

the public interest by offering a variety of informative and educational programs.

State-owned NAMPA is the only news agency in the country, and the service is beyond the means of community media. No special rates are offered to accommodate smaller media organizations, and it provides no audio or video feeds.

The arrival of independent television news on One Africa Television was seen as progressive, because the station approaches stories from an angle different from that of the state broadcaster. Other stations have a variety of international news feeds, including CNN, CCTV (China), Voice of America, BBC World Service, Deutsche Welle, etc. One Africa Television relays BBC World News throughout the night.

Namibian media ownership is not transparent. Haikali said that media houses are reluctant to provide basic information on their shareholdings or ownership structures. Similarly, communities are often unaware of who serves on the boards of community radio stations. There are also cross-media ownerships. For instance, Trustco owns the tabloid investigative newspaper *Informanté*, as well as a 50-percent share of the press that prints *The Namibian*.

Although the media provide broad coverage of the different ethnic groups in the country (especially the various languages, all of which have an individual NBC service), panelists remained concerned about the challenges this presented. “It can create squabbles between [representative of the various linguistic groups] because they can be seen to be fighting for time allocation,” Ngamane 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

### Namibia Objective Score: 2.63

The score for this objective fell moderately from 3.05 last year as a result of all but two indicators (Indicators 3 and 6) receiving noticeably lower scores. Indicator 5 (government subsidies for commercial media) remained the leading indicator and scored about two-thirds of a point higher than the overall objective score. Indicators 6 and 7 (market research and audience measurement) both lagged behind by a half-point and a point, respectively.

Panelists said that for the most part, media outlets operate as efficient, professional, and profit-generating businesses, but they stressed that the lack of cooperation among media houses, in particular newspapers, creates inefficiencies. All newspapers have their own distribution networks, resulting in duplicated effort and expense. Panelists observed that three trucks complete the 500-kilometer journey every day to deliver newspapers from the capital, Windhoek, to Keetmanshoop, and suggested that a more cooperative approach could result in savings, increased efficiency, and timely service to rural areas.

With community media, start-up capital has been provided by national and international bodies, including UNESCO and, in the case of Katutura Community Radio, various Namibian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). But these bodies are, in some cases, not sustainable. These stations often depend on the vision of particular individuals and collapse when these people leave.

Panelists noted that the advertising industry is growing quickly and that Namibian media are served by a multitude of agencies, most of which are linked to South African and international agencies (Ogilvy and Mather, JWG Advertising, Advantage McCann, etc.). The big agencies also tend to target the big companies and leave out the small-business people. The industry is also centered in Windhoek, and smaller media outlets can be neglected by these large agencies. "For us, self sufficiency is impossible—advertisers are shying away from community radio," Ngula said.

Few media houses have released financial reports, and there is only one outlet (*The Namibian*) whose circulation is independently audited by the Audit Bureau of Circulation.

Media houses have limited access to reliable research they can use in marketing themselves to advertisers, although corporate companies often rely on research by *Media Tenor* to assess the coverage they are receiving in the media. Media houses have also been involved in conducting their own research. Katutura Community Radio completed a survey of

*Katutura Community Radio completed a survey of 1,000 households in Windhoek and found that audiences had little to choose from among radio stations. "All stations are doing the same thing—playing music all day with little else," Ngula said.*

1,000 households in Windhoek and found that audiences had little to choose from among radio stations. "All stations are doing the same thing—playing music all day with little else," Ngula said. "The most popular stations remain NBC and Omulunga Radio."

The research also revealed that people from lower-income groups tend to prefer entertainment over informative programming. Katutura also draws on research conducted by the Media Monitoring Project, which focuses on how issues such as gender are covered. *The Namibian* has also conducted research in relation to its youth supplement, which has provided the paper with valuable insights into its target market.

#### 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.

*Described as a growing organization, MISA-Namibia currently represents all media sectors (community, commercial, and public) through its board of directors and is also responsible for training of media professionals. It aims to promote conditions for a free, independent, and pluralistic media environment in the country.*

## OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

### Namibia Objective Score: 2.66

Although only improving slightly, this objective was the only one of the five that did increase its score this year, up by 0.14 point. Panelists improved their scores for Indicators 2 (professional associations) and 3 (supporting NGOs) but gave somewhat lower scores for Indicators 6 (access to printing facilities) and 7 (distribution networks). All indicators scored within a half-point of the overall objective score, except for Indicator 2; despite its improvement, it still lagged by about a point.

Panelists noted that Namibian media are represented by two main bodies, the Namibian Editors' Forum and MISA-Namibia. The editors' forum focuses on addressing issues relating to professionalism and functions primarily as a lobby group. It includes all print media and represents 17 media houses in total. Described as a growing organization, MISA-Namibia

#### 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.

currently represents all media sectors (community, commercial, and public) through its board of directors and is also responsible for training of media professionals. It aims to promote conditions for a free, independent, and pluralistic media environment in the country. However, neither of these organizations could be regarded as trade unions, and they are not mandated to represent individual journalists who experience conflicts with their employers. In this respect, journalists appear to have little protection. A third organization, Oruwano, was noted as representing artists, media workers, and DJs in the country.

With regard to the education of journalists, panelists noted that training institutions, including the Polytechnic of Namibia and the University of Namibia, do not have the latest equipment. As a result, students graduate with theoretical knowledge and little practical experience. Training was regarded as too theoretical and abstract, and standards were felt to be low. Katutura Community Radio produces the opposite, panelists said—candidates with a lot of practical experience but not enough theoretical knowledge.

Working professionals do get opportunities to attend international training events, but panelists said that many of these opportunities were "hijacked" by senior managers. These senior staff members, who would not normally bother to attend a domestic training, were often tempted by an invitation to be trained overseas. The Polytechnic of Namibia offers a course for media managers, but panelists said that the course is not aimed specifically at working managers but more at graduate students who have the time to attend full-time courses.

MISA-Namibia conducts training for community radio stations, and Katutura Community Radio offers exchange programs with Bush Radio in Cape Town, South Africa. Most of this training is sponsored.

Namibia has two major print presses, printing all independent media, so there is an element of competition in this field. However, as has already been noted, panelists said that in some areas the competition was unhealthy, particularly with regard to issues of distribution.

Similarly, neither the competing cell phone companies (Cell One and MTC) nor the television broadcasters (NBC TV and One Africa Television) seem to be keen on sharing facilities. The result is a massive duplication of transmitters and repeater stations. One Africa Television was refused permission by the NBC to use its existing transmitter facilities in Windhoek and Oshakati and, at great expense, had to erect its own.

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## List of Panel Participants

**Dan Kamati**, director, University of Namibia Radio, Windhoek

**Maureen Tatire**, presenter, Katutura Community Radio, Windhoek

**Manfred Issacks**, director, Nolnet Radio Project, Windhoek

**Selma Shipanga**, trainee, Media Institute of Southern Africa-Namibia, Windhoek

**Ngamane Kauraihe-Upi**, media activist, Gender and Media Southern Africa-Namibia, Windhoek

**Mathew Haikali**, director, Media Institute of Southern Africa-Namibia, Windhoek

**Borrondu Ngula**, news coordinator, Katutura Community Radio, Windhoek

**Lynette Magaramombe**, news presenter, Katutura Community Radio, Windhoek

**Joseph Kawana**, regional education officer, Caprivi Regional Office, Katima Mulilo

**Andre Engelbrecht**, director, Ocean Wave Community Radio, Swakopmund

## Moderator

**Robin Tyson**, lecturer, University of Namibia, Windhoek

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