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SENEGAL

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Some 35 years after embracing multi-party democracy, the West African country of Senegal enjoys continuing political and social stability. It is widely considered an example of democracy and the successful observance of human rights. Additionally, its media sector has transitioned from state monopoly to pluralism. Today there are numerous examples of this pluralism in Senegal: five television channels, including one run by the government; one state-run and 18 private commercial radio stations; 30 community radio stations; 18 daily newspapers, including the state-run *Le Soleil*; 15 periodicals and five on-line newspapers. At the same time, the country has seen the emergence of large private media companies such as Sud Communication, Futurs Médias, Wal Fadjri, Avenir Communication, and Express News.

Yet this outwardly vibrant media sector hides many problems. In particular, 2008 was an exceptionally repressive year for Senegalese journalists, marred by physical attacks, bullying, newspaper office vandalism, summons before the national police's Criminal Investigations Division, and imprisonment. The publication manager of the private newspaper *24 Heures Chrono*, El Malick Seck, was sentenced to three years in prison—the first sentence of this kind in the history of the Senegalese media—for committing “character injury” to President Abdoulaye Wade. [After the MSI panel met, Wade pardoned him in April 2009.] In addition, police beat two radio reporters when they attempted to interview a soccer player. Though one of the reporters was hospitalized for three weeks, no charges were filed.

The drop in Senegal's overall score is attributable to notably lower scores in Objective 3 (Plurality of News), Objective 4 (Business Management), and Objective 5 (Supporting Institutions). Objectives 3 and 5 still scored within the realm of “near sustainability.” The lower score in Objective 4, one of last year's lower-scoring objectives, dropped it into the category of “unsustainable, mixed system.” Objective 1 (Freedom of Speech) and Objective 2 (Professional Journalism) remained effectively unchanged.

SENEGAL AT A GLANCE

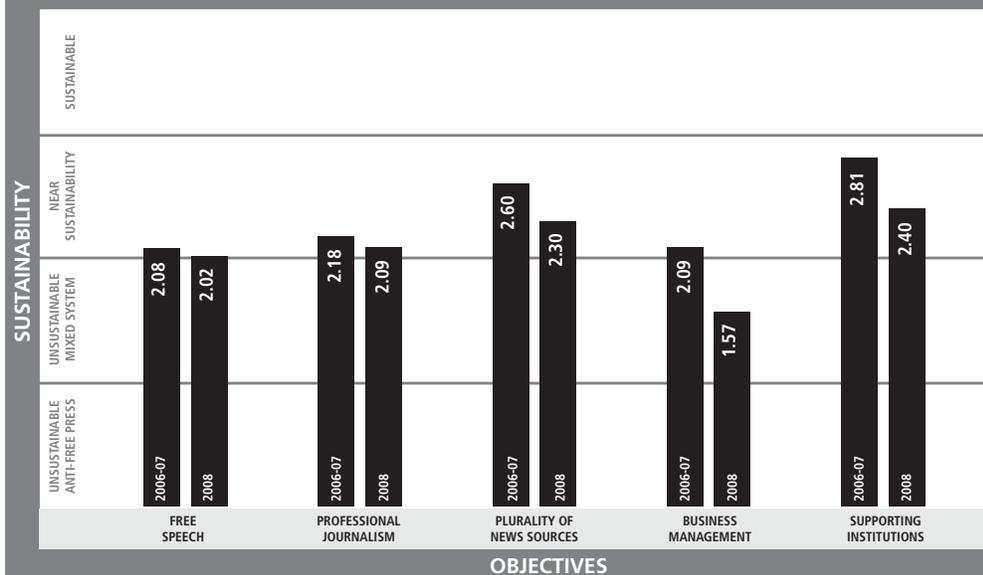
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 12,853,259 (July 2008 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Dakar
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Wolof 43.3%, Pular 23.8%, Serer 14.7%, Jola 3.7%, Mandinka 3%, Soninke 1.1%, European and Lebanese 1%, other 9.4% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Muslim 94%, Christian 5%, indigenous beliefs 1% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages (% of population):** French (official), Wolof, Pulaar, Jola, Mandinka (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2007-Atlas):** \$10.17 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2008)
- > **GNI per capita (2007-PPP):** \$1,640 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2008)
- > **Literacy rate:** 39.3% (male 51.1%, female 29.2%) (2002 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** President Abdoulaye Wade (since April 1, 2000)

MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** Print: N/A; Radio: 28; Television stations: 1
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** N/A
- > **Broadcast ratings:** N/A
- > **News agencies:** Senegalese Press Agency
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** N/A
- > **Internet usage:** 820,000 (2007 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: SENEGAL



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

Senegal Objective Score: 2.02

Although the score for this objective remained more or less the same as last year, a few indicators did receive different evaluations from the panelists. Indicator 3 (market entry) improved, while Indicator 6 (libel laws) and Indicator 9 (entry into the journalism profession) both lost some ground. Further, a handful of indicators stood out for their scores: Indicators 2 (broadcast licensing) and 6 both scored more than a half-point lower than the overall objective score, while Indicators 3 and 8 (media access to international news reports) both scored close to three-quarters of a point higher.

The panel agreed that Senegalese law provides citizens with the right to speak freely. Article 8 of the constitution of January 2001 guarantees “civil and political liberties” and lists free speech first among those liberties, noted Souleymane Niang, a member of the Council for the Respect of Ethics and Deontology. Article 10 guarantees the “right to free opinion by way of speech, writing, images, [and] peaceful marching,” and Article 11 guarantees “the freedom of creation,” including creation of a “press outlet for political, economic, cultural, sports, social, leisure, scientific information... ” without prior authorization. Niang said that this state-approved legislative framework is in compliance with international legislation, specifically the African Human and Peoples’ Rights Charter, adopted in 1981 by the Organization of African Unity, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

However, Alassane Diallo, publication manager of Ferlo.com, pointed out that Articles 72, 80, and 255 of the Senegalese Criminal Code ban any remark that might “break the peace,” “lead to popular revolt,” and “spread false news.” Article 139 of the Code of Criminal Procedures also allows for the bringing of any accused individual before the court on the prosecutor’s order.

Overall, panelists said that freedom of speech is not threatened by any legislative edicts but by political and social forces that strongly oppose it. To illustrate this, they cited the brutal beating of Kambel Dieng of Radio Futurs Média and Karamokho Thioune of West Africa Democracy Radio. Officers of the national police’s Multipurpose Intervention Brigade beat the two journalists as they were conducting an interview after the Senegal-Liberia soccer game on June 21, 2008. Panelists also noted that Farba Senghor, a former government minister who is head of communications for the ruling Senegalese Democratic Party, promised to wage war against the media in retaliation for the creation of the Committee for the Defense and Protection of Journalists, which urged

the media to observe a “press-free day” on July 22, 2008, to demand justice in the Dieng-Thioune case. On July 26, 2008, during the 8 p.m. newscast on state-run television, Senghor invited all the state department heads close to the ruling party and all the party’s loyalists to boycott the private media and suspend all subscriptions and advertising contracts with them to punish them for what he called a very critical tone against the president and the government.

The panelists also denounced the ransacking of the offices of two private dailies—*L’As* and *24 Heures Chrono*—and the beatings of some of their employees on August 17, 2008. This came after Senghor had threatened reprisals against “a part of the press” that intruded on his private life—including an interview with his estranged wife and an account questioning his salary as board chairman of a private bus company. Senghor was dismissed from government and stripped of government immunity on August 28 after police arrested several suspects who had ties to the minister. A criminal court in Dakar sentenced 12 people, including Senghor’s driver and two of his bodyguards, to five- and six-year prison terms in the attacks.

The panelists said the slowness of the judicial system in all these cases, even though complaints were filed promptly, is evidence that Senegalese journalists are not well protected because legislation guaranteeing free speech is not enforced.

On the issue of radio broadcast licensing, Niang pointed out that Senegal’s licensing regime is based on the Telecommunications Code of 2001 and the

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.

Telecommunication and Postal Regulation Agency (known by its French acronym ARTP), and that any project developer must file an application with the Ministry of Information for approval, then apply to the ARTP for the technical certificate. This procedure is becoming increasingly unfair, biased, and politicized in favor of individuals and groups close to the politically powerful, Niang said. The other members of the panel agreed, saying they know many people who have applied for radio frequencies in vain for years, while others with high-placed connections are granted frequencies immediately and then sell them on the black market. According to Niang, this is a serious breach of the Senegalese Telecommunications Code, which clearly states that any frequency is non-transferable, and each license becomes void after six months if it not used by the original grantees to launch a radio station.

The panelists said that there is a complete judicial vacuum with respect to the granting of television frequencies. Ismaïla Dieng, the head of communications with Oxfam/Senegal, deplored the lack of public calls for offers, which leads to a case-by-case procedure for granting licenses—usually after a private meeting between the television project developers with the president. A similar situation was noticed in the cases of Walf TV, RDV, 2STV, and Canal Info—the only private television channels licensed to broadcast in Senegal. All the panelists warned that this restrictive procedure could lead to the state dictating the editorial policies of the media.

Sn2 was the only television channel created in 2008. It is a branch of the state-run broadcaster, Radio-Television Senegalaise (RTS), and so far only airs old soccer games.

Access to the Senegalese media market is generally not restricted, panelists said, other than the political obstacles to broadcast licensing. The written press in Senegal is no longer subject to prior authorization since the adoption of Law No. 96-04 in 1996. Diallo praised the fact that, in order to create a newspaper, “it is enough to write and print it, then go to a phone booth, call the attorney general, and tell him ‘I just wrote a newspaper.’” The same is true with the on-line press.

As far as taxes are concerned, the press is subject to the same rules as the other economic sectors: a 25 percent tax on profits. “Press businesses have no reason to complain,” Dieng said. “Part of their input resources is tax exempt, which is not the case in other industries, which are subject to the regular regime.” Dieng added that “state aid to the press is a form of financing its operation. The telecom or electrical power businesses do not enjoy this much magnanimity.” Niang expressed regret that because many media owners are not familiar with the Senegalese Investment Code, they miss some tax advantages. However, Aly Diouf, a journalist with *Wal Fadjri*, a private daily, denounced the fact that the state

uses taxation to intimidate the media, most obviously by threatening outlets that owe back taxes.

Most violent acts against, and harassment of, journalists and media outlets go unpunished, the panelists said, especially when they are committed by the state and its allies. After the police beatings of Dieng and Thioune, “I was naturally expecting—as were many Senegalese—that justice would be done,” said Antanar Ndiaye, a journalist with *L’Office*. “But I was surprised to see that the minister of information, who seemed to be on the side of the press, changed his mind when the minister of justice defended the beating of the two journalists as self-defense, saying that the journalists attacked the police officers first.” Ndiaye said he believes that the chances of this act of aggression going to trial are slim.

According to the panel, the heavy prison sentences given to the aggressors in the ransacking of *L’As* and *24 Heures Chrono* represent progress, but Senghor, who is suspected of having ordered the criminal act, has not been brought to court. However, the panel notes, the legal proceedings in this case initially involved Senghor but became problematic because of his government position. He was later dismissed from government.

All of these criminal acts against the media generated a number of demonstrations. On July 22, 2008, 97 percent of media professionals observed a “press-free day,” according to the Committee for the Defense and Protection of Journalists. The panelists regretted the fact that, in reality, this day revealed how divided the media is. At some outlets, the journalists were in favor of it and the owners against. With Radio Océan FM, a station close to the political powers, journalists in favor of the press-free day received layoff threats. Other outlets kept their normal schedule while proclaiming their solidarity, including *Wal Fadjri*, 2STV, and the state-run media. The panel said that when it comes to showing its support for the media in cases of aggression, the Senegalese public is generally passive.

The panelists said they do not think the state gives favorable treatment to the state-owned media. If it did, Niang said, the state-run media would not need advertising. According to Madior Fall, general coordinator of *Sud Quotidien*, the RTS faces almost all the same economic and financial problems as the rest of the media. Ibrahima Khalilou Ndiaye, a journalist with the state-run daily *Le Soleil* and spokesperson for the Information and Communications Professionals Union (SYNPICS), pointed out that the state media enjoy no favorable treatment in terms of access to information either. Even though the RTS is the natural recipient of official information, private media are granted exclusive stories by members of the government on “sensitive issues” that state-run media cannot touch.

At the same time, the panelists said they believe that the government-backed media is not as independent as it could be. René Massiga Diouf, a journalist and reporter with RTS, disagreed, arguing that although state media are given guidelines from the government, the journalists working for the state are free to comply with them or not. And while there is pressure, he said, it comes from media managers who suggest how stories should be approached. The other members of the panel considered this proof that the government journalists are not independent, since those managers are appointed by the state.

Regarding libel, the panelists said that some of the repressive provisions in Senegal's media laws are obsolete. Ibrahima Khalilou Ndiaye said he feels that there is currently no political will to decriminalize media offenses. He pointed out that Article 80 of the Senegalese Criminal Code, which severely punishes any remark that breaches the peace, is still in effect although the president had promised to eliminate it. Under this article, many journalists and publication managers are frequently summoned to the national police's Criminal Investigation Directorate over allegedly "seditious remarks."

When President Wade promised during a state visit to Paris that he would free imprisoned journalist El Malick Seck, he was reminded that it was in the same place that he had promised to eliminate Article 80. One panelist, while saying he was against the imprisonment of Seck, said journalists should not feel that they are above the law and can say whatever they want. He said he did not understand why Seck, who was imprisoned over an editorial implicating Wade and his son in an alleged money-laundering scandal, brought up the case again after six years unless he wanted to defame Wade. The only reason for the media to reopen a court case, this panelist said, is if new information is uncovered.

Access to public information is considered a right by Law No. 96-04, provided that journalists comply with their duties, Niang said. In reality, access to public information is generally difficult. According to one panel member, the only way to obtain official information is to commit libel and thus force the authorities to take a public stand. Niang suggested the situation is more nuanced. Access to public information, he said, has improved considerably, but journalists do not take advantage of the many possibilities. Niang said journalists rarely visit the government's official web site (gouv.sn), particularly the page for the Ministry of the Economy and Finance, an important source of information. The media could have avoided useless debates over the country's macroeconomic mechanisms and consumer price indices if reporters had simply consulted the web site of the National Agency for Statistics and Demography, he said. Niang also

said access to official information is less of a problem with the central government than with local authorities, which particularly apparent any time regional correspondents have trouble interviewing a regional governor.

All the panel members said access to international news is good, but they expressed doubt about the capacity of Senegalese journalists to explain international news from an African perspective. Oumar Seck Ndiaye said it was unfortunate that the news presented by RFI, CNN, and the major international media are not processed by the local media, which seem not to care that the information reflects Western ideology and interests. For example, he says, when the international media refer to Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe as a dictator, the Senegalese media do the same without any critical distance.

Any graduate of a recognized school of journalism or anyone who has worked as a journalist for at least two years is considered a journalist, according to Law No. 96-04. Journalists also have the right to organize freely and create associations. Nevertheless, the panel pointed out that there are a number of pernicious effects of such a system where people become journalists not because of a desire to report the news or to encourage government transparency but rather to escape unemployment.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Senegal Objective Score: 2.09

The score for this objective remained nearly unchanged compared to last year, and only Indicator 6, the balance of news and entertainment, showed the slightest sign of change, with panelists awarding it a score a bit lower than last year. Indicator 5, pay levels for journalists, was the lowest scoring indicator again this year. As with last year, it was the only indicator to not receive a score close to the overall objective score; it fell short by about a point.

Senegalese journalists achieve professional standards despite their tendency to favor comments over facts, said Ibrahima Khalilou Ndiaye. He said the influence of French journalism partly explains this tendency, but that many journalists truly do not know what thorough reporting is. Oumar Seck Ndiaye agreed: "A foreigner just arriving in Senegal might think that in this country, there is only politics and tabloid news." Given the prominence of politics in the media, he wondered if journalists are not in fact news recipients rather than producers and whether politicians are the ones who determine the nature of the news. Diallo reminded panelists that street vendors tell newspaper managers that only politics sells.

All the panelists acknowledged that gathering background information and calling on experts when covering an issue are not strong considerations for the local press. Diallo said the media are not entirely responsible for this, because Senegalese academics only speak when their own interests are involved.

Regarding ethics, the panelists said that while it would not be accurate to say corruption is generalized among the Senegalese journalists, it is nevertheless a serious problem. Oumar Seck Ndiaye bemoaned the fact that it is very easy to buy an indulgent article or a convenient report. He mentioned a recent case in which one of two men competing for the position of chairman of a local entity set up a press office and gave each invited journalist XOF 25,000 (\$60) for their support in the next day's press. Niang warned that as long as ethical rules are not taught in journalism schools, the problem will continue to affect the Senegalese media. The only media outlet that has drawn up an ethical charter is, according to the panel, the newspaper *Le Quotidien*. There is a Council for the Respect of Ethics and Deontology, a self-regulating institution of the Senegalese media, but it has been mostly dormant for a long time.

The panelists said self-censorship is a reality in the state-run media as well as the private media. The panel members condemned self-censorship when it is the result of bribing journalists or press outlets. Oumar Seck Ndiaye says that it often happens that a journalist who comes back from a field report refrains from disclosing everything in exchange for XOF 50,000 (\$120), which is "generously offered by someone who wanted to take care of the journalist's transportation needs."

With respect to covering key current events and issues, the panelists said the only restrictions that authorities impose on journalists generally arise from issues concerning national defense, such as the long-running civil war in the southern region of Casamance.

Journalists' salaries theoretically are set by the collective contract signed in 1991 between SYNPICS and media owners, which established the salary of an entry-level journalist at XOF 169,000 (\$400) per month. In reality, salaries vary according to the outlet. A journalist with Canal Info News, a private television channel, can earn XOF 100,000 (\$250) one month and XOF 75,000 (\$190) the next. The panel said that while such differences may seem odd, they are subject to the logic of productivity from the point of view of the channel's management. Another problem raised by the panelists is the absence of a contract that would guarantee social and medical care. Many press owners systematically use service contracts that leave journalists vulnerable. For example, the manager of Canal Info News recently dismissed about 20 journalists, saying that the service contract they had with the

company had reached its end. In response, through a board created to defend their interests, the affected journalists have started legal proceedings against their employer, accusing him of an "abusive layoff" and claiming six months unpaid salary.

Panelists said the salary problem obviously influences the level of corruption among journalists. Oumar Seck Ndiaye said it would be an illusion to believe that corruption is only present among novice journalists, due to their small salaries. Despite their relatively acceptable salaries, editors-in-chief are also affected by this plague, he said.

The panelists were very critical of media programming. They all deplored the fact that entertainment eclipses newscasts in the Senegalese media, so much so that radio or television hosts have become more famous than journalists. Oumar Seck Ndiaye said that there is too much rap, hip hop, and "mbalax" (local music) on radio and television, and too little time given to current events. Antanar Ndiaye blamed press owners who tend to hire editors-in-chief or program managers based on friendships and not on competence. Once appointed, these persons with zero journalistic expertise are more comfortable with playing music throughout the day than with producing quality news programs.

The panelists were positive overall with regard to the availability of modern facilities and equipment. Diallo said equipment for news gathering is definitely better in Senegal than in neighboring Burkina Faso, Mali, or Mauritania. On the other hand, Senegal is still living in technological "prehistory" when compared with Kenya, South Africa, or Nigeria, Oumar Seck Ndiaye added that it makes more sense to compare Senegal to these latter countries since Burkina

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).

Faso, Mali, and Mauritania are relatively “behind” when it comes to the media.¹

Niang said it is important to remember that the Senegalese media are generally migrating from an analog to a digital environment, and that there are still discrepancies in terms of equipment and facilities of various outlets within the same media type, or across types, and between the urban and rural media. Younoussé Diédhiou, a journalist with RTS Ziguinchor, remarked that it was precisely with that in mind that President Wade installed “cyberpresses,” equipped with 10 computers each, in all 14 regions of the country. This allows regional correspondents to have access to the Internet, but the project has not succeeded everywhere. In Ziguinchor, for example, the equipment was misappropriated.

The panelists were more or less satisfied with the quality of specialized programs and reports on economic, trade, and political issues that relied on independent investigations. Oumar Seck Ndiaye pointed out, however, that reports are not always driven by news concerns and rarely sustained. He cited the example of an AIDS prevention program started by an American NGO that intended to involve the media. Although the NGO provided documentation and human resources to help the media in the planned awareness campaign, the media companies that it contacted refused to get involved, saying that an issue such as AIDS does not sell. But, he added, when the NGO started giving subsidies to the media, a number of reports were made on the subject—and they stopped once the NGO cut the subsidies.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

Senegal Objective Score: 2.30

This objective lost some ground primarily from lower scores in three indicators—Indicator 4 (news agencies), Indicator 5 (private broadcasters produce their own news), and Indicator 7 (coverage of minority issues). Overall the scores for the indicators were somewhat widely spread. Indicator 2 (citizen access to the media) and—despite its lower score—Indicator 5 both scored more than a half-point higher than the overall objective score. Indicators 3 (objectivity of state media), 6 (transparency of media ownership), and 7 all scored more than a half-point lower.

A variety of private and state news sources are available currently in Senegal, but Niang said these sources still have

¹ Editor’s note: scores and comments from the panelists in each of these countries confirm this assertion for Burkina Faso and Mali, while there is relative comparability between Senegal, Nigeria, and Kenya. Mauritania, with a much smaller and more concentrated media, fell in between the two groups while South Africa was the leader.

a quality and diversity problem. He regretted that the public turns to Western news sources, such as *France 24*, *Le Monde*, and *Les Echos*, to understand the current world economic crisis for lack of Senegalese and African sources that are able to provide a uniquely African point of view on the matter.

The panelists also pointed out a huge imbalance between the urban and rural areas in terms of the access to multiple news sources, and they commended community radio stations for their important role in bridging the gap. In the northern region of Fouta, Oumar Seck Ndiaye mentioned, livestock thefts have dropped thanks to the creation of community radio stations; now, when thefts are reported, people who spot the stolen cattle immediately call the community stations, which then tell the owners where to retrieve them.

All the panelists recognized that access to the national media is completely unrestricted and, according to Niang, only finances stand in the way of access to international media. New media, specifically the Internet, are not accessible to everyone, particularly considering that many regions do not even have electricity.

The panelists were critical of state media, which they said do not reflect the diversity of opinion in Senegal or the full political spectrum. “Our fellow journalists in the public media are well trained,” Fall said. “The journalists are not the problem. The problem is the state. When the regime of President Diouf ended in 1998-2000, the public media began to open to the public. But since 2000, this dynamic has been broken.” René Massiga Diouf, a journalist with state-run television, admitted that the state-run media do not function as they should: “The day before yesterday, after the 8 p.m.

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.

newscast, a viewer called me and talked to me for 15 minutes, saying 'We are sorry, sir, but you are far from providing a service to the Senegalese people. You open with the president of the republic and you close with the president of the republic.' He told me that there was life beyond the president of the republic and the Senegalese Democratic party."

The Senegalese Press Agency, the only national agency, and the foreign press agencies accredited in Senegal do their job properly, panelists said. At the same time, the Senegalese press outlets do not always act ethically when using agency dispatches. The panelists said many journalists put their own names on dispatches without reworking them. In addition, they pointed out that Senegalese media outlets do not always honor the business commitments they have with the agencies. The Senegalese Press Agency, or APS, "has the monopoly on selling its own or foreign agencies' (AFP, Reuters, etc.) dispatches in Senegal," Diallo said. "The subscription is XOF 100,000 (\$250) per month. But no one really pays for this, although APS journalists have toured the media explaining how a press agency functions. Even us, at *L'Actuel*, when we realized that the others were not paying for this service, we stopped paying, too," Diallo acknowledged.

The panelists said that the independent media make efforts to produce their own programs. At the same time, according to Fall, the independent radio stations are far behind state-run radio in terms of quality. The panelists not only considered the independent broadcasters incapable of competing with the national radio, but they accused them of trying to imitate it. They commended community radio stations for offering programs that meet the people's needs. For example, programs popularizing farming techniques and raising awareness of public health issues and peace education are very useful, especially in Casamance, a region plagued by civil war since 1982.

Ownership of media companies is not transparent, the panelists said. For example, *L'Actuel* had to stop publication when the public learned that it was owned by Pape Diop, the president of the Senegalese Senate, said Diallo, a former manager of the newspaper. Fall contended that "in a democracy, there must be transparency. We should know who owns the media businesses. Regulations and provisions must be observed. That is why we have them." In defense of the media, however, panelists pointed out that the economic and financial conditions of the Senegalese media businesses are so dismal that they cannot afford to not have a hidden sponsor.

The panelists felt that there is no state interference with the media representing all social interests and points of view as long as they do not undermine national unity, particularly when ethnic minorities are involved. The panelists pointed

out that community radio stations seem better adapted to dealing with minorities.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Senegal Objective Score: 1.57

All the indicator scores, with two exceptions, received lower scores in 2008 from the panelists, contributing to a sizeable reduction in score from 2.09 to 1.57. Only Indicator 2 (media receive revenue from multiple sources) and Indicator 5 (government subsidy of private media) remained unchanged. Most of the indicators received scores similar to the overall objective score; however Indicator 2 scored about three-quarters of a point higher, while Indicator 7 (audience and circulation measurement) scored about a point lower.

The Senegalese media, particularly private media, are generally unprofitable. Recently, 20 journalists with Canal Info News were fired and have demanded six months back pay. Moreover, many media companies offer short-term contracts or open-ended internships, as well as using freelancers, to reduce costs. Fall said the Senegalese media are confronted by these problems because the state does not recognize their public-service mission and therefore does nothing to help them, such as lowering taxes. Dieng said the problem is not so much with the state as with the media outlets, which are incapable of becoming true businesses with qualified marketing and human resources departments and a clear strategic vision. As a result, all newspapers have set their selling price to XOF 100 (\$.25) simply because some competitors did it first. The panelists pointed out that community radio stations are prevented from making a profit because advertising is forbidden and they have to live off subsidies from international NGOs.

The panelists said that the media have multiple financing sources but that more could be done to diversify them. Diallo said the Internet should be a financing source for the Senegalese media, but the media's online presence currently has no added value in terms of presentation, or marketing and so does not attract capital. On the other hand, while advertising is a 10 billion franc-a-year business in Senegal, the panelists said the profits are not equitably distributed. Eighty-five percent of advertising revenues are reserved for communication agencies and the state-run media. The panelists said that the government seems to be observing the boycott launched by Farba Senghor, the former government minister, who urged department heads to stop advertising in the private media to punish it for its allegedly hostile attitude toward the government.

The panel members had a negative opinion of how advertising agencies and associated industries support development of an advertising market favorable to the media. The agencies—most of them of foreign origin—are accused of trying to force their terms on the Senegalese media, and cutting shares for the media and the Internet while asking for “exorbitant” fees of up to 20 percent. “The day when media owners say that their outlets will stop carrying ads under these circumstances and go on a one-week advertising strike, I guarantee that the rules of the game will change,” Niang predicted.

Ibrahima Khalilou Ndiaye noted that Law No. 96-04 clearly sets a ratio of 70 percent news and 30 percent advertising for media outlets. But not everybody is aware of the legislation and regulations, and even if they were, the media would still not observe them because neither the government nor the National Council for Broadcasting Regulation enforces them.

The state subsidy to private media was XOF 300 million (\$720,000) in 2007-2008. The panelists said it is not clear if this aid will also be granted in 2009, because the subsidy has not been explicitly included in the national budget for the next year. All the panelists expressed regret that the government keeps postponing a decision on this issue, as it prefers to hand money out to journalists like it is charity for the poor.

The Senegalese media do not conduct research to develop marketing strategies that are adapted to different segments of the public, panelists said. “Look at the products. They all have the same price, and no analysis is available to distinguish among them,” Dieng said. “When a new product is created, it copies what others do. If others use bubbles, I’ll do bubbles. But does everybody need bubbles? No. I am certain that

physicians need a newspaper that addresses health issues more extensively—and no one does that. Everybody does ‘Politics,’ ‘News in Brief,’ and ‘Sports.’ Everyone sells at the same price.”

Regarding audience ratings and circulation figures, Niang lamented the fact that statistics are available for almost all consumer products except the media. Dieng expressed skepticism about the relevance and reliability of statistics provided by the media: “Quantitative studies—that is to say polls—are only useful in determining the media hierarchy, which is the only thing that advertisers give value to, and therein lies the problem. Perhaps someone should say ‘My paper is not read by 100,000 people every day but it is read by this particular socio-professional category,’ or ‘It is valuable for the quality of its support. If you wish to project a positive image, this is my main selling point.’”

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Senegal Objective Score: 2.40

Lower scores in Indicators 2 (professional associations), 4 (academic journalism programs), 5 (short-term training), and 6 (access to printing and newsprint) drove the loss of 0.41 in the score of this objective compared to last year. The other indicators remained the same. None of the indicators deviated from the overall objective score by more than 0.35, with the exception of Indicator 1 (trade associations), which scored about two-thirds of a point lower.

All the panel members complained that the media are one of the few socio-economic sectors in Senegal that do not have an association of owners and managers. The panelists named only one association to which media owners may belong: the African Press Publishers Association. But, Niang said, it has no members representing Senegal; Madiambal Diagne, the president of the press group Avenir Communication and a representative in the association, is in fact representing himself. The absence of a united network of press owners leaves multiple opportunities and challenges. Niang noted that there is “a limited negotiating capacity for access to the many nationally available tax advantages, due to a lack of unity among media owners to be represented before the state.” He said there also was a “lack of coherence in asking Senelec and Sonatel for discounted electrical and telephone rates, respectively, and explaining that the media companies are a unique type of business.” This also presents a “risk of dissension among media owners in discussions with the unions if they were to renegotiate the 1991 collective contract with Senegalese journalists,” Niang said.

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.

The panelists concluded that the economic and tax environment is riddled with strong constraints, mostly because of the lack of an association for media owners.

As for journalists, in 1984 they created SYNPICS. Ibrahima Khalilou Ndiaye, its national spokesperson, said that if the main purpose of a union is to defend the material and moral interests of its members, then SYNPICS does its part very well. He added that SYNPICS sometimes defends non-members. However, Antanar Ndiaye said that SYNPICS is only efficient when it must defend journalists against the government or religious institutions, not when it is called on to address the salary and training issues that journalists face on a daily basis. "When I was at Canal Info, they had a SYNPICS branch there. When I left Canal Info, the journalists had not received their salaries for six months. When the Labor Inspectorate sent a notice, it did not change anything. It seems now they are being paid again, but it will not be for more than two months, and they will only receive half of their salaries. So where is SYNPICS, what do they do?" Antanar Ndiaye said. In general, however, all the panelists said SYNPICS does its job.

NGOs such as Panos West Africa, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, and others were credited by the panelists with a positive image with respect to their support for the Senegalese media. Ibrahima Khalilou Ndiaye said he was glad that the NGOs, including those that do not specialize in media issues, systematically denounce any violation of press freedoms.

The panelists recognize that Senegal has long produced quality journalism graduates, particularly from the Center for the Study of Information Science and Technology, created in 1965 by the government in partnership with UNESCO. But Ibrahima Khalilou Ndiaye said that with the exception of the

Higher Institute for Information and Communication Science, operated by the Sud Communications Group, more and more unqualified private schools have started to train future journalists and issue dubious degrees. He wondered how a school can train a journalist without having a radio studio—as is the case with Senegal.

Short-term training is available in Senegal. The panelists praised the activity of the NGOs on this point, particularly Panos West Africa, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation for financing many training seminars on human rights, health, the environment, politics, and economics. Dieng said that he became an economics journalist with no prior training in economics thanks to the numerous training seminars organized by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

But the panel also acknowledged the limits of current training capabilities. "There is a growing gap among training, the needs of the market, and the evolution of the professional environment of the media in terms of technology, challenges, and stakes," Niang said. "Today, for example, there are few schools specializing in news gathering on the Internet. I do not really know any school that addresses this problem. Is it a reliable news source? How do we determine the relevance of a piece of information that we find on the Internet? Such modules are being developed in the schools of journalism. But here we have not even begun to do it, although we really need to."

Senegalese publications have long depended on private printing companies and Graphisol, the printing plant owned by the government-run daily newspaper *Le Soleil*. Ibrahima Khalilou Ndiaye said he is glad that private newspapers such as *Wal Fadjri*, *Le Matin*, *Le Populaire*, and *Le Quotidien* are starting to run their own printing plants. He said there were two reasons for this shift. First, private newspapers try to avoid the diktat of the state-run Graphisol, which recently refused to print *L'As*, probably on suspicion of being anti-government. Second, owning a printing plant adds to diversification and provides additional resources.

In Senegal there are two press distribution companies. One, the Press Distribution Agency—a local branch of New Parisian Press Distribution Service, part of the French Groupe Hachette—is in charge of disseminating its client newspapers in the main cities of Senegal. The other is a network of individual newspaper vendors that is particularly active in Dakar, the capital. The panelists said that the two networks are apolitical and tend to recruit client newspapers from both the public and private sectors. On the other hand, the individual vendors are accused of contributing to the conformity of the Senegalese press by telling journalists what items sell best. The panelists deplore the fact that

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 vendors favor political and tabloid news, which has led to the over-politicization of the Senegalese press, to the detriment of other issues. In addition, the persons who control the individual vendors' network can block the sale of a newspaper and keep it from the public if they have issues with the paper's managers. One panel member suggested that this is how *L'Observateur* became the most-read XOF 100 newspaper, eclipsing *Le Populaire*.

The panel said Internet publishing is not subject to political restrictions. However, the government and the National Council for Broadcasting Regulation have recently started looking for means to regulate online Senegalese newspapers because their discussion forums are filled with attacks on the private life of Senegalese authorities and ordinary citizens, and their tone is often insulting.

List of Panel Participants

René Massiga Diouf, television journalist, Radio-Television Senegal, Dakar

Aly Diouf, political journalist, Walf Fadji, Dakar

Madior Fall, general coordinator, *Sud Quotidien*, Dakar

Souleymane Niang, consultant and trainer, member, Council for the Respect of Ethics and Deontology, Dakar

Alassane Diallo, publication manager, Ferloo.com, Dakar

Oumar Seck Ndiaye, founder, community radio OxyJeune, Dakar

Younousse Diédhiou, journalist, Radio-Television Senegal, Ziguinchor

Naby Sylla, journalist and reporter, RFM radio, Saint-Louis

Antanar Ndiaye, journalist, *L'Office*, Dakar

Oumou Cantome Sarr, African Assembly for the Defense of Human Rights, Dakar

Ismaila Dieng, director of communications, Oxfam/Senegal, Dakar

Laity Mbassor Iba Amath Ndour, regional correspondent, *Le Quotidien*, Kaolack

Ibrahima Khalilou Ndiaye, journalist, *Le Soleil*; spokesperson, Information and Communications Professionals Union, Dakar

Moderator and Author

Mor Faye, professor of sociology of the media and communication, Gaston Berger University, Saint-Louis

Assistant

Seynabou Dramé, Communications Department, Save The Children, Dakar

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