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SOUTH AFRICA

The breadth, depth, and volume of media in today's South Africa make it almost impossible to believe that only 15 years ago, the country was ruled by its white minority through the oppressive system of apartheid—and that scarcely more than 30 years ago, television was banned. The country has 20 daily newspapers plus several daily tabloids, 28 major weekly newspapers, more than 300 community newspapers, and more than 500 consumer magazines. There are 85 television stations, 13 private commercial radio stations, 92 community radio stations, and 18 public radio stations. In addition, democratic, majority-ruled South Africa has a constitution and laws that guarantee free speech and media.

Nevertheless, media advocates say they see worrisome signs that as the nation matures, its freedoms are coming under threat. The media sector witnessed battles in the past year that raised questions about whether political and commercial interests are undermining speech and media freedoms.

Perhaps the most heated conflict is over accusations that the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), the country's highly regarded public broadcaster, had blacklisted media practitioners who are critical of the ruling African National Congress (ANC). The controversy resulted in the suspension of the SABC's head of news, Snuki Zikalala, and the suspension, rehiring, and re-suspension of the SABC's group chief executive, Dali Mpofu. A broad coalition representing various civil society groups, media organizations, and unions has committed itself to ensuring that public broadcasting remains independent and free from interference from the government and political parties as well as commercial and economic influence.

In addition, two high-profile columnists were fired by their respective newspapers over their writings on sensitive religious and racial matters, and a black-based journalists' organization barred white journalists from covering one of its events.

On World Press Freedom Day, May 3, the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) stated that South Africa's "political and economic leadership was slowly showing signs all too familiar with Africa's post-colonial nationalist governments—that is, the intolerance towards criticism and leaning towards legislative power to seek protection from public scrutiny."

Such pressures, amplified by the run-up to elections, impacted South Africa's scores this year. The overall score dropped moderately by a third of a point, from 3.10 to 2.77. While this score still places South Africa high among countries in Africa, its position as the leader is a bit less convincing. All individual objective scores fell, and only Objective 1, Freedom of Speech, remained above 3.00. However, all the other objective scores are in the upper half of "near sustainability," that is, higher than 2.50.

SOUTH AFRICA AT A GLANCE

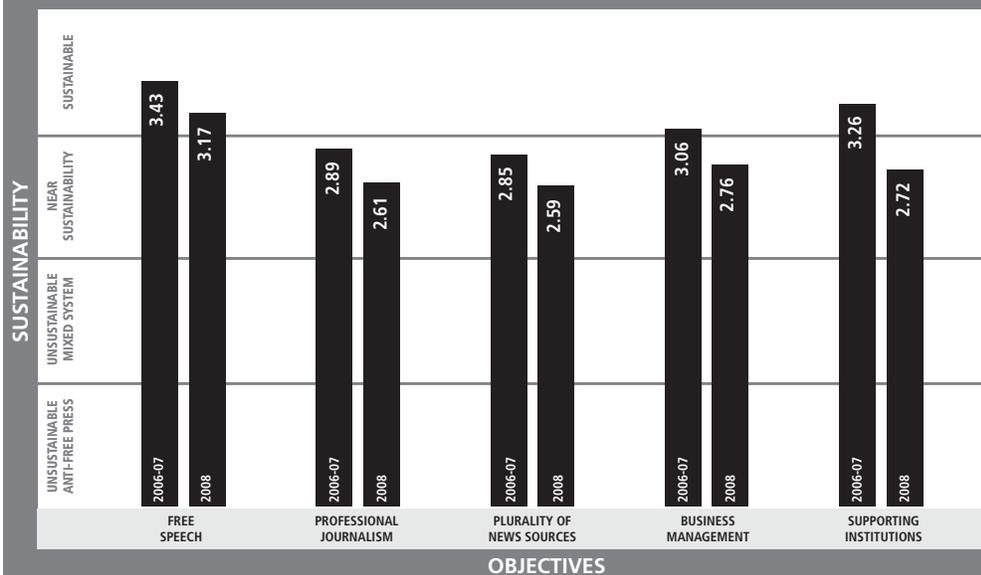
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 47.9 million (stats SA, 2007 and OMD Media Facts 2008)
- > **Capital cities:** Pretoria (Administrative Capital), Cape Town (Legislative Capital), Bloemfontein (Judicial Capital)
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** black African 79%, white 9.6%, colored 8.9%, Indian/Asian 2.5% (2001 census)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Zion Christian 11.1%, Pentecostal/Charismatic 8.2%, Catholic 7.1%, Methodist 6.8%, Dutch Reformed 6.7%, Anglican 3.8%, Muslim 1.5%, other Christian 36%, other 2.3%, unspecified 1.4%, none 15.1% (2001 census)
- > **Languages (% of population):** IsiZulu 23.8%, IsiXhosa 17.6%, Afrikaans 13.3%, Sepedi 9.4%, English 8.2%, Setswana 8.2%, Sesotho 7.9%, Xitsonga 4.4%, other 7.2% (2001 census)
- > **GNI (2007-Atlas):** \$274.0 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2008)
- > **GNI per capita (2007-PPP):** \$9,560 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2008)
- > **Literacy rate:** 86.4% (male: 87%, female: 85.7%) (2003 est., OMD Media Facts 2008)
- > **President or top authority:** President Jacob Zuma (since May 9, 2009)

MEDIA SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** Print: 1000+, Radio: 100+, Television Stations: 50+
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** Top three dailies by circulation are *Daily Sun* (508,512), *The Star* (177,899), and *The Sowetan* (143,167), all private. Top three weekly/weekend newspapers are *Sunday Times* (499,033), *Rapport* (318,359) and *Sunday Sun* (209,474) (Audit Bureau of Circulation)
- > **Broadcast ratings:** Top three radio and television channels are all publicly owned. Radio: Ukhozi FM, Umhlobo Wenene FM, and Lesedi FM. Television: SABC 1, SABC 2, SABC 3 (AC Nielsen)
- > **News Agencies:** South African Press Agency (non-governmental), Health-e (private), ASP (private), I-Net (private)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** Total: ZAR 20.1 billion, Radio: 13.5%, Print: 39.8%, Television: 37.7%
- > **Internet usage:** 7.6% of total adult population (2.355 million) (SAARF 2006)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: SOUTH AFRICA



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

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

Unsustainable Mixed System (1-2):

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

Near Sustainability (2-3):

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

Sustainable (3-4):

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

OBJECTIVE 1: FREEDOM OF SPEECH

South Africa Objective Score: 3.17

While panelists lauded South Africa's legal framework for creating space for an open media environment, they said that in practice, the situation is not quite ideal. Panelists this year handed a modest drop to the score for freedom of speech, although overall the score is strong. Indicator scores fell noticeably for numbers 4 through 7 (attacks on journalists, legal guarantees of independence for public broadcasting, libel laws, and access to information). Indicator scores remained relatively close to the overall objective average except for Indicator 5 (legal guarantees of independence for public broadcasting), which scored about a point lower.

South Africa's constitution enshrines the principles of free speech and promotes free expression rights and media laws, thus creating an enabling media environment. The 1996 constitution guarantees "freedom of the press and other media; freedom to receive or impart information or ideas." However, the constitution states that these freedoms do not extend to "propaganda for war; incitement of imminent violence; or advocacy of hatred that is based on race, ethnicity, gender, or religion and that constitutes incitement to cause harm."

In addition to enjoying constitutional guarantees, South Africa is a signatory to the principles of the Windhoek Declaration of 1991, the African Charter on Broadcasting of 2001, and the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa. These declarations and principles recognize broadly the positive role that media play in social, political, and economic development.

South Africa has mechanisms for media self-regulation: the Press Council, which addresses public complaints against the print media; and the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa, which represents the electronic media.

However, the panelists noted several developments that they described as serious regressions from the spirit of 1994—when multi-party democracy replaced apartheid rule. This year's developments included a threat by the ruling ANC to create a so-called media appeals tribunal, the deterioration of confidence in SABC and the ensuing tussle for its control, and the proposed passage of laws and amendments that could limit media freedoms.

Panelists cited the Films and Publications Amendment Bill as an example of a threat to media freedoms and free speech. The bill would amend the Films and Publications Act 65 of 1996 prohibiting the knowing distribution of a publication with hate speech but exempting scientific, documentary, dramatic,

artistic, literary, or religious publications; publications that amount to a bona fide discussion, argument, or opinion on a matter pertaining to religion, belief or conscience; and, publications that discuss a matter of public interest.

The Films and Publications Act established the Film and Publication Board, with the objective of regulating the creation, production, possession, and distribution of certain publications and films through classification, imposition of age restrictions, and giving of consumer advice. The amendment bill seeks to broaden the act to include regulating what may or may not be published or broadcast, ostensibly to protect children from being exposed to inappropriate materials. The bill proposes that publications that could harm children must be submitted to a classification office before publication. Panelists said the amendments cast so broad a net that they would have to include social media and blogs, and would impose unnecessary restrictions on individual freedom of expression.

A court case from the past year that tested media freedom with a positive outcome was *Midi TV(e-tv) v. DPP*. In 2005, the director of public prosecutions barred e-tv, a privately-owned free-to-air station, from broadcasting a documentary relating to the "Baby Jordan" murder case. Prosecutors argued that the administration of justice would be prejudiced if the broadcast took place. However, the Supreme Court of Appeal ruled in favor of e-tv, holding that the prosecutors had to show a real risk that substantial prejudice would result. The judgment effectively stopped the slide into legal censorship and freed the media from restrictions on reporting of current court cases.

The Independent Communication Authority of South Africa (ICASA) is the regulatory body that issues broadcast licenses. Its decisions are made public and its processes are expected to be transparent. The panelists said that there is a perception that preferential treatment does occur, but they did not offer examples.

Panelists said that entry into the media sector and the tax structure for media are fair and comparable to other industries. Starting a small-, medium-, or micro-enterprise (SMME) requires only registration under the Companies Act of 1973. SMMEs can apply for funds from the government.

Crimes against journalists or media outlets are prosecuted vigorously, but such crimes are rare.

Panelists said that small media outlets in rural areas receive less institutional support than urban-based media and are subjected to direct and subtle forms of intimidation. They cited an incident in Grahamstown in which local government officials boycotted a small media house that did not toe the official line. Panelist Jude Mathurine, lecturer at Rhodes

University and digital editor for *Grocott's Mail*—both located in Grahamstown—said that officials' use of finance as a weapon poses a threat to free speech and affects access to information.

In addition, Mathurine cited two examples of police intimidating journalists at crime scenes. In one case, a journalist from *Grocott's Mail* photographed a police car that had gotten into an accident, presumably because the officers were under the influence of alcohol. The journalist was detained, but the case was ultimately thrown out. In another case, a Sowetan journalist was arrested for taking photographs of a furniture store that was being looted after a taxi had crashed into the storefront. The journalist himself had called the police.

In February, the South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF) condemned the police harassment of a senior reporter of *Die Kaapse Son* at a murder scene in Wellington in the Western Cape. Maahir Pretorius was allegedly reporting outside the area cordoned off by the police when he had his camera taken and was threatened with assault by police officers. Despite pleading his rights, he was apparently ordered away from the scene. An officer is said to have shouted: "He is from the *Son* and will write [expletive] about the police...we will beat you up!" SANEF called on police leadership in the area to investigate the case and discipline the officers if found responsible.

Many panelists said that they felt that South Africa's public media are not independent, despite legal guarantees and sound organizational policies in place. Some said that the appointment of board members by the ruling party erodes independence, while others pointed to the problem of editorial interference. Panelist Roberta Makhambeni, media liaison officer for North West Province's legislature, said that SABC's news reports are heavily one-sided. "Watching the news is like watching 'yes, Minister,'" she said. "There's six consecutive items about 'this minister did this and this, this minister did that.' ...They think the SABC exists to profile them."

Panelist Tsheliso Thipanyane, CEO of the Human Rights Commission, disagreed. He emphasized that the constitution and legislation guarantee the SABC's independence, and said that negative conduct by individuals is what affects implementation and credibility. "If matters go awry, one should not blame the system," he said. "The problem is really the people who are put into the structures who are not able or not willing to use the laws, because the terms of the constitution are very clear: we must do our work without fear or favor."

Panelists cited claims that SABC news head Snuki Zikalala has blacklisted journalists who are critical of the government.

An independent group, the Sisiulu Commission, has been established to probe the matter. Panelist Amina Frense, a representative of SANEF and MISA, contended that the Sisulu Commission was set up precisely because ethical, editorial, and legal frameworks and guidelines are in place. The commission itself, she said, is an expression of commitment to principles of editorial independence.

Public information is readily available and the right of access is equally enforced for all media, panelists agreed. They cautioned, however, that public access to information is affected by the centralization of information, as well as by officials who are not fully aware of their duties.

The Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 aimed to implement the constitutional right of access to any information held by the state and any information that is held by another person, and is required for the exercise or protection of any rights. However, the Protection of Information Act 84 of 1982, an apartheid-era law still on the books, deals with various offenses related to the disclosure and/or publication of classified information—without specifying what is classified, how it can be declassified, and how such information is to be dealt with by the courts. The act will be repealed by the Protection of Information Bill.

A case involving access to information laws is *Independent Newspapers v. Minister for Intelligence Services in re: Masetlha v President of RSA*. In the case, Independent Newspapers applied for access to documents that had been removed from the court record, and the minister of

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.

intelligence opposed the application on the basis of the Protection of Information Act. The court held for the first time that the right to open justice and court hearings includes the media's right to access to the court record. Only in exceptional circumstances may this right be limited—for example, where it would threaten national security.

Other laws that limit access are the Defense Act 42 of 2002, which states that no person may publish any classified information without authority to do so; the National Key Points Act 102 of 1980, which provides that no person may furnish any information relating to the security measures or incidents involving strategic facilities such as airports, power plants, and the South African Reserve Bank without being legally obliged or otherwise entitled to do so; and the Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977, which restricts publication of certain information relating to criminal proceedings. Section 205 of the Criminal Procedure Act compels journalists to reveal their sources and empowers the courts to imprison anyone who refuses to disclose information relating to criminal investigation.

While in general media outlets have unrestricted access to international news and news sources, some panelists said that community media and small publishers' access is limited by lack of funding.

Entry into the journalism profession is generally free, and the government imposes no licensing, restrictions, or special rights for journalists.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

South Africa Objective Score: 2.61

Panelists expressed mixed opinions about the quality of journalism, and returned a somewhat lower score for Objective 2 this year. Most of the drop came from lower scores in three indicators: Indicator 3 (self-censorship), Indicator 6 (news-entertainment balance), and Indicator 7 (use of modern equipment). Overall, the indicators scored similarly to the final objective score.

Some panelists noted in particular that recent changes to the profession—new technologies, the Internet, citizen journalism, blogging—have affected the way news is disseminated, sometimes at a cost to accuracy.

Frense said that traditional journalism must be considered distinct from the blog phenomenon. "While I'm not saying that blogging is bad, there is a difference between reporting and blogging. Anybody who can operate a laptop thinks he or she is a journalist."

Mathurine agreed that technology has negative potential. "Convergence processes transform the nature of newspapers and broadcasters to 24-hour, multi-platform publishers," he said. "Google reporting threatens to undermine the standard of reporting, if news organizations do not continue to support and train their gatekeepers."

The scarcity of time, resources, training, and specialization has also affected professionalism, as well as balanced and fair reporting. Panelists said that South African reporting today is characterized by a lack of in-depth analysis and investigative journalism. The absence of a journalists' union also weighs against quality reporting, they said. Senior journalists are disappearing from newsrooms, leaving few professional mentors, and the role of copy editors is diminishing.

Panelist William Bird, director of the Media Monitoring Project, said that while the majority of stories are fair, they tend not to be well sourced or researched. "SABC radio has, on average, less than one source per story. Further, the growing tabloidization tendency has also seen the key elements being relegated in the print media," he added.

Panelists agreed that mainstream journalists follow recognized ethical standards, and both print and broadcast media have their codes of conduct and self-regulatory bodies. The Press Ombudsman has been established by print media companies. Participation is voluntary, but most companies are party to the process. The Broadcasting Monitoring Complaints Commission (BMCC), established by law, is part of ICASA and headed by a judge. Community broadcasters fall under the BMCC, while SABC and commercial stations are members of the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) and have

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).

opted for self-regulation. Among advertisers, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is self-regulatory.

MISA South Africa director Faiza Abrahams-Smith said that the absence of trade unions has left media members without a forum to debate ethics and with no opportunities for shadowing or mentoring for young journalists.

Panelists spoke of the growing practice of self-censorship in broadcast and print. Bird said that self-censorship is “one of the greatest challenges facing the SABC.” Commercial and political interests influence what is reported and how, despite legislation and codes established to ensure editorial independence. Makhambeni said that the accusations of blacklisting at SABC point to political and self-censorship forces at work.

In another example cited by panelists, *Rapport* editor Tim du Plessis hired columnist Deon Maas, who suggested that Satanism ought to be treated like other religions. Du Plessis first distanced himself and his paper from the column, but after readers, distributors, and advertisers threatened to boycott the paper, he fired the columnist.

Panelists also pointed to the firing of columnist David Bullard by the *Sunday Times*. In this case, they argued, self-censorship was long overdue. Bullard penned his thoughts in his “Out to Lunch” column for 14 years, but on April 6, 2008, his writings were deemed racist, sparking a public outcry. The matter resulted in widespread discourse on the role of the media, the soundness of its internal checks and balances, and its responsibilities to society. Panelists questioned how such a profoundly offensive column could get past editors.

Panelists said that key events and issues are covered well, but coverage of the security, defense, and intelligence sectors are generally difficult because of secrecy laws.

On the issue of salaries, there was consensus that journalists are paid well enough to discourage corruption—though perhaps not well enough to dissuade senior journalists from being attracted to jobs in government and in other professions. Panelists recommended that media companies develop strategies to retain experienced staff.

Gender differences in pay also surfaced in panel discussions. Recent research on women in newsrooms conducted by SANEF and Gender Links found that women make up 45 percent of South African newsroom staffs but occupy less than 30 percent of top management posts. The average salary of women in newsrooms is 21 percent less than that of men. The income differential between white men and black women is especially pronounced: black women in newsrooms earn 25 percent less on average than white men. The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) has

committed its member countries to achieving gender parity in all areas of decision-making by 2015.

Panelists said that they believe that entertainment programming has eclipsed news and information in the broadcast media. However, they lauded the SABC’s reach as being extensive and diverse.

Several panelists said that facilities and equipment for gathering, producing, and distributing news are modern and efficient, but others said that levels vary among institutions.

Compared with beats such as crime, politics, and economics, environmental and health reporting are marginalized because specialization is limited. Panelists complained that coverage of the energy blackouts that plagued South Africa in 2008, while well reported as news events, were not given any in-depth analysis. Panelists also said that media companies invest least in investigative journalism because of the high costs.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

South Africa Objective Score: 2.59

The panelists rated Objective 3 modestly lower than last year, with most of the indicators scoring close to the overall objective score. Indicator 2 (citizen access to media), Indicator 3 (objectivity of public broadcasters), and Indicator 6 (transparency of media ownership) experienced noteworthy drops. Indicator 4 (news agencies) and Indicator 5 (independent broadcasters produce their own news) scored more than a half-point higher, and Indicator 6 scored more than a half-point lower.

Panelists said that the media environment is open and that South Africa has a plurality of news sources. But they said that income level determines a consumer’s degree of access to information, particularly for subscription television and print media, and that this affects the diversity of information available.

SABC is considered to have extensive reach, cutting across geographical borders, bridging the urban-rural divide, and addressing multiple minority and majority audiences in each of South Africa’s 11 official languages—plus sign language. In addition, the public broadcaster is affordable and accessible. Higher-income viewers can subscribe to digital satellite service owned by Multi-Choice and operated under the brand name DSTV. It consists of established South African and international channels, premium sports, entertainment, and news.

Participants felt that citizens’ access to print media is limited by affordability, geography, and language. Many of South Africa’s blacks—who make up 79 percent of the population—

cannot read English or Afrikaans, the print media's principal languages. According to the All Media and Products Survey 2007, a copy of one of 18 newspapers surveyed reached only 29.2 percent of all adults. Penetration was highest among the white population (37.8 percent) and lowest among blacks (27.0 percent).

Most major newspapers have online editions, and there are other Internet-based news sources as well, including I-Africa, IOL (Independent Online), All Africa, the Newspapers Directory (newspaper.co.za), News 24, AfriNews, Rap 21, Sangonet, Biz Community, and the recently launched South Africa Civil Society Information Service (SACSIS). But the plurality does not necessarily equal balance, according to Mathurine. "Generally, if you look at the distribution of online presence, you will see a very strong urban bias, an age bias, and a gender bias," he said.

Panelists said that while the government places no restrictions on access foreign news sources, there is a correlation between access and affordability. "Income level has a direct relationship with levels of access to [foreign] media," Bird said.

The question of whether the public media are nonpartisan and serve the public interest was particularly polarizing for the panel. Some panelists said that they believed that SABC has been true to its mandate, while others said that it is not so clear cut. By coincidence, the panel discussion was held on the day that the SABC board of directors suspended CEO Dali Mpofu, who had suspended SABC head of news Snuki Zikalala the day before.

In 2007, the Broadcasting Complaints Commission dismissed three cases of bias brought against the SABC, according

to Bird. He also cited Media Monitoring Project research showing that SABC coverage is generally fair during election periods, and that the top five political parties were given 80 to 90 percent of the coverage. "The only voices you hear are African National Congress [the ruling party], Democratic Alliance, and Inkatha Freedom Party, and then it just starts to trickle off after that. The coverage is probably equitable, but where they fall down badly is that they don't give the full political spectrum sufficient space," Bird said.

Media can gather independent news from a variety of news agencies, with the SABC and the South Africa Press Association (SAPA) being the principal sources for print and broadcast. Other sources are I-net Bridge, Eye News Service, East Cape News Agency, Touchline, Backpage Pics and Health E-News Agency, Mpumalanga African Eye, Grahamstown ECNA, Gender Links, SACSIS, and Sangonet. International agencies such as Reuters and Associated Press are also available.

While independent broadcast media produce their own domestic news programs, they lack capacity to cover the rest of Africa and the world. Panelist Melanie Chait, CEO of Big Fish Digital Film School, said that the independents are restricted by the high costs of production. Community broadcast media "produce programming to serve local needs, but on a very limited scale," she said.

Media ownership is concentrated mainly among white-owned companies. The panelists pointed out that while other business sectors have charters drawn up by stakeholders to set equitable racial quotas with respect to ownership, management, and control within the sector, the media sector does not. Thipanyane provided details: "While there is a satisfactory coverage and ownership of media, especially with community radio stations, there is still a monopolistic tendency in the print media, and there's little transformation. English and Afrikaans still dominate print media. There is also an urban versus rural divide," he said.

Print media are dominated by four major companies. Independent Newspapers Group, part of Irish tycoon Tony O'Reilly's Independent Newspapers, publishes 14 national and regional papers, including the *Star*, the *Cape Times* and the *Cape Argus*. Media 24, owned by Naspers, a 94-year-old company with its roots in the Afrikaner population, publishes the *Daily Sun*, *Beeld* and *Die Burger*, among others. Avusa, whose owner Johnnic describes it as a black empowerment company, publishes the *Sunday Times*, the *Sowetan*, *Business Day*, and others. And the Caxton and CTP Group, established in 1902, publishes dozens of local and regional papers.

In radio, SABC is the largest owner, with national commercial stations 5FM and Metro, and regional broadcaster Good Hope FM in the Western Cape. PBS radio has 12 stations

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.

broadcasting in 11 official languages. Other commercial radio groups are Primedia, with Highveld 94.7; Talk Radio 702; Kaya FM, with KFM and Cape Talk; Radmark, a radio sales and buying house with Jacaranda and East Coast Radio; United Stations, with Algoa FM and OFM; and Independent, with YFM, Classic FM, P4 KZN, and P4 Cape.

Television is dominated by the SABC; e.tv, which is owned by Hosken Consolidated Investments Limited and Venfin Limited; and M-Net and DStv, both owned by Media 24/Naspers.

Foreign investment is capped at 20 percent for broadcast media.

While acknowledging the importance of community media in addressing the unequal representation of civil society voices, panelists noted that a large portion of community media are owned by major media companies. In fact, a majority of community newspapers are owned by the Caxton and CTP Group. Hence, community media is a misnomer in the South African context.

Some participants said that official, political, commercial, and union viewpoints are all represented in the media, but that civil society's voice is less audible. The South African Civil Society Information Service and Sangonet are private, non-profit news agencies initiatives launched to fill this gap.

As noted, English and Afrikaans dominate the print media, even though Zulu is spoken by a majority of the population. Panelists credited SABC, which broadcasts in all 11 official languages, as catering to a majority of South Africa's people.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

South Africa Objective Score: 2.76

In general, media companies in South Africa have sound organizational and financial systems. With the exception of community media, all are profit-making businesses, and many, including the public broadcaster, have extended their reach to other parts of Africa. However, panelists pointed out some weaknesses and delivered a modestly lower score this year. Although most indicators remained the same, scores did fall for indicators 4 (balance of advertising and other revenue), 6 (use of market research), and 7 (audience and circulation measurement). Nonetheless, all indicator scores remained within a half-point of the overall objective score.

The panelists noted that a well-managed business does not necessarily have editorial independence and/or fair editorial processes. They referred to the axing of *Sunday Times* columnist David Bullard and *Rapport* columnist Deon Maas as examples.

Several panelists argued that commercial interests appear to prevail over editorial interests. "Many editors, especially with the commercial press, have to spend a large ratio of time on commercial issues, so I think there's a bit of a compromise," Frense said. "If you just look at what happened to David Bullard—how did it get through... various gatekeepers and still get published?"

Panelists said that advertising is the primary revenue source for all media, including the public broadcaster. Print media drive revenue from sales of publications and advertising. Among television broadcasters, the SABC raises revenue from licenses and advertising, M-Net from subscriptions and advertising revenue, and e.tv from advertising.

The total spent on advertising in media—including outdoor, theater, and Internet—in South Africa in 2006 was more than ZAR 20 billion, with about 40 percent going to print media, 38 percent to television, and 16 percent to radio, according to AC Nielsen statistics. The country's top advertisers are First Rand Bank Limited, Vodacom Communications, the national government, Standard Bank, MTN, Unilever, ABSA, Nedbank, Shoprite Checkers, and SAB Miller.

Advertising agencies and related industries support an advertising market, panelists agreed, though some said that broadcast media depend overly on advertisements, to the point that they determine the scheduling of television programs. Media managers, participants said, are under pressure to work more advertisement into their programs, at a cost to sound editorial placement.

"We get fed that constant thing that if you ban junk food ads during children's programming time, then you're going to lose all your children's content—you're going to lose the ability to

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.

do good content for children. Make them fat and hope they'll die early, but at least they'll die well-educated," Bird said.

Chait pointed out that "ICASA regulates 12 minutes per hour for ads on TV, and SABC definitely exceeds this regularly. More ads are always needed to meet revenue goals, as costs increase and other forms of revenue are not considered."

Advertisers are subject to scrutiny, however. The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) was created and funded by the marketing communications industry to regulate advertising in the public interest. ASA works closely with the government, statutory bodies, consumer organizations, and the media to ensure that the content of advertising meets the requirements of the Code of Advertising Practice. It also established the Sponsorship Dispute Resolution Committee and Sponsorship Appeal Committee.

Makhambeni and other panelists said that advertisements are misplaced geographically and racially, due to advertising agents' urban bias and lack of understanding of the demographic profile, lifestyles, and aspirations of the diverse groups scattered across South Africa. While independent media do not receive government subsidies, community media do. Justin Arenstein, director of the Association of Independent Publishers, said in written comments to the panel that "although government established The Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA), independent print media do not receive government grants. They receive low-interest loans, but only in very limited circumstances. Community radio receives large government grants. Government is also one of South Africa's largest advertisers, and this financial clout is beginning to be used to make editorial demands on media."

Abrahams-Smith disagreed with Arenstein's comments, saying: "When government, three years ago, funded community radio for programs... a lot of that money didn't reach most of the stations, even though those stations produced the programming."

Large media companies rely on market research conducted by the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF), which conducts the All Media and Products Survey, a Radio Audience Measurement, and a Television Audience Measurement. SAARF is financed through a fixed fee from print media owners and through an industry levy—currently 1 percent of advertising revenue from other media owners. It is a tripartite organization consisting of marketers, advertising agencies, and media owners.

Media companies also rely on figures from the non-profit organization Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC), based on a bi-partite agreement between advertisers and advertising agencies on the one hand and media owners on the other.

Its primary function is certification and provision of accurate and comparable circulation figures to assist in the buying and selling of advertising and promotional material. Publisher members are requested to submit audited figures verifying their circulation, by means of a circulation certificate.

Broadcast ratings are produced by SAARF, and the SABC also produces ratings for its television programs using standard audience research software. The ABC produces data on newspaper circulation.

Panelists expressed concern that market research is costly and concentrated in the major urban centers. Community media and small publishers are marginalized, they said, which undermines their organizational sustainability.

Arenstein reported: "Market research is essential for new entrants and independence in a fiercely contested monopolized media market. Very few smaller media are able to afford the high costs of qualitative research or to retain analysts and/or research strategists available in South Africa... Generic demographic data from other sources is also scarce, expensive, or alternatively unreliable. Market research is therefore a major weakness in the SA media industry."

Panelists said that large media companies have the ability to pay for market research, which essentially benefits their members. "SAARF research tends to be skewed towards the larger organizations, and as a result it's servicing its members or alternatively the institutes that fund it. Research per se does not encompass the broad spectrum of media of this country," Mathurine said.

Panelist and National Community Radio Forum CEO Franklin Huizies agreed, and said that SAARF ratings are biased against community media. "Community radio is a definite competitor to the commercial and private radio stations. Community radio stations don't contribute towards SAARF. I feel that SAARF deliberately does not sample rural areas because of cost issues—because we don't contribute."

Panelists recommended a probe and review of how media research is conducted.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

South Africa Objective Score: 2.72

Several bodies in South Africa actively protect the interests of the media and freedom of speech. However, the absence of a journalists' union that seeks to address factory-floor issues as well as broader ones is a grave mistake, according to panelists. Objective 5 had the largest drop of the five objectives this year, and all indicators fell noticeably.

However, no indicator scored more than a half point above or below the overall score.

Participants reported that the South African Union of Journalists officially closed up shop in 2003, and was formally renamed the Communication Workers' Union in 2005. The current union, however, primarily represents the interests of large private companies and parastatals. Most of the remaining members of the old union decided that they would not be unionized, although SABC media practitioners crossed over to the Broadcast and Electronic Media Allied Workers Union and some joined the Media Workers' Association of South Africa, which represents black workers in media.

Participants said that the absence of a union exclusively for journalists is the missing link in ensuring professionalism and high standards of journalism.

Apart from unions, South Africa has several professional associations. The Southern African Broadcasters Association, housed by the SABC and NAB, provides support for subscribing members. Organizations such as the Federation of Black Journalists (FBJ), National Community Radio Forum, Online Publishers Association, Website Association of South Africa, and Southern African Freelancers' Association advocate more generally for improving conditions for sustainable media. SANEF's current focus is on editors and broadly on journalists, to the extent that the organization issues statements if a journalist is harassed or arrested.

"There's a historic divide between black and white media workers, and this has yet to be overcome," Chait said. Media organizations are constructed also along racial lines—and this played out in 2008 when the FBJ excluded white journalists from reporting on an event that they organized, sparking public debate. A complaint was filed with the Human Rights Commission, which found that the FBJ's exclusivist policies violate the constitution.

Print Media SA (PMSA), formed in 1996 after the restructuring of the Newspaper Press Union, serves as an umbrella body to constituent members: the Newspaper Association of South Africa, the Magazine Publishers Association of South Africa (MPASA), and the Association of Independent Publishers (AIP), responsible for community newspapers and affiliate members, the ABC, Media Credit Coordinators, and the Forum of Community Journalists. PMSA represents 700 newspaper and magazine titles. It represents members' interests at industry level and provides administrative and secretarial services to its constituent and affiliate members.

MPASA is a non-profit organization that promotes and protects the interests of its members as well as the interests of all print magazine publishers in South Africa. Its mission is to support and contribute to the growth of the industry,

promote magazines as a medium, increase advertising expenditures, and serve as a repository of industry knowledge for its members. AIP's aim is to grow small community and grassroots newspapers. The National Community Radio Forum serves as a lobbying and advocacy vehicle as well as a networking forum.

New-media organizations include the Internet Service Providers Association, Wireless Application Service Providers Association, the Website Association of South Africa, and the Online Publishers Association.

MISA concerns itself with media subjects, trends and issues that affect the media in South Africa and beyond its borders. MISA, the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI), NAB, and SANEF are also active on issues of media freedom and freedom of expression. FXI is at the forefront of advocacy, education, and mobilization of civil society, lobbying for media freedom and freedom of expression. A South Africa-based NGO, FXI is a member of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange.

Panelists expressed concern that media support groups are urban-based and urban-centric, and that challenges to media in rural South Africa fall through the cracks. There was consensus, however, that the NGOs are effective and resourceful and are able to mobilize, respond to, and address media issues speedily.

Panelists acknowledged the MDDA, a partnership between the government and major print and broadcasting companies. MDDA supports start-ups and fosters the development of community and small media, but is slow in delivering on its mandate, panelists said.

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.

Several institutions provide journalism degrees and short-skills programs. However, panelists had mixed opinions regarding the quality of training in higher education, with some contending that courses are mainly theoretical. Journalism and media studies are offered at degree and diploma levels at universities and comprehensive universities, including Rhodes University, the University of Stellenbosch, the University of the Western Cape, the University of the Witwatersrand, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, the University of kwaZulu Natal, the University of the North West, the University of Port Elizabeth, and the University of Johannesburg. The University of South Africa Department of Communication offers a six-month certificate course for beginners in community journalism.

Quality short-term training and in-service training institutions exist, and their programs allow journalists to upgrade their skills or acquire new ones. According to the panelists, journalists' ability to access short-skills training might be hampered by the costs, and the majority of training institutions are based in the urban centers—factors that have kept a large and growing pool of freelance journalists outside of the circle of formal training, education, and knowledge.

Numerous complementary short-term training programs are offered by the Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership, the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, Genderlinks, and the National Electronic Media Institute. Panelists welcomed the trend toward in-house training.

While sources of newsprint and print facilities are private, apolitical, and unrestricted, panelists said that a problem with monopolization exists. Mondi Shanduka Newsprint is a major player in the newsprint sector, supplying Independent Newspapers, Media 24, and Johnnic Communications. Sappi is another entrant to this market. Panelists said that community and small media have difficulty accessing this market because newsprint is costly, and Mondi Shanduka does not supply this group.

Broadcast transmitters are divided between state and private hands. While they are apolitical, panelists said that they felt they are restricted. Chait added that Sentech and Telkom are parastatals that control satellite, broadband, and broadcast transmitters. Independently owned media distribution channels are financially sustainable.

Distribution of print media, said Bird, tends to be privately based but operates as a monopoly, with new players struggling to gain access and fair distribution. He provided an overview of the distribution issues: "In terms of broadcast, these issues are regulated by ICASA in a manner that is generally fair and relatively free from political interference. Online media continues to be tied down by monopolies like

Telkom as well as ludicrous Internet fees. Mobile operators seem set to continue the monopoly and high access costs, and government seems incompetent to deal with the issues and lacks political will and strategy in this regard. The only issue more criminal in this area, other than the monopolies themselves, is government's failure to address the situation."

List of Panel Participants

Tsheliso Thipanyane, chief executive officer, South African Human Rights Commission, Johannesburg

Roberta Makhambeni, government communications, North West Legislature, Mafikeng

Melanie Chait, chief executive officer, Big Fish Digital Film School, Johannesburg

William Bird, director, Media Monitoring Project, Johannesburg

Amina Frense, editor, South African Broadcasting Corporation/South African National Editors Forum/Media Institute of Southern Africa, Johannesburg

Faiza Abrahams-Smith, director, Media Institute of Southern Africa, Johannesburg

Jude Mathurine, lecturer, Rhodes University, Grahamstown

Franklin Huizies, chief executive officer, National Community Radio Forum, Johannesburg

The following participant submitted a questionnaire but did not attend the panel discussion.

Justin Arenstein, director, Association of Independent Publishers, Nelspruit

Moderator

Shehnaaz Bulbulia, head of print department, co-director of the Africa program, Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, Johannesburg

Observer

Johanna Mavhungu, researcher, Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership, Rhodes University, Grahamstown

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