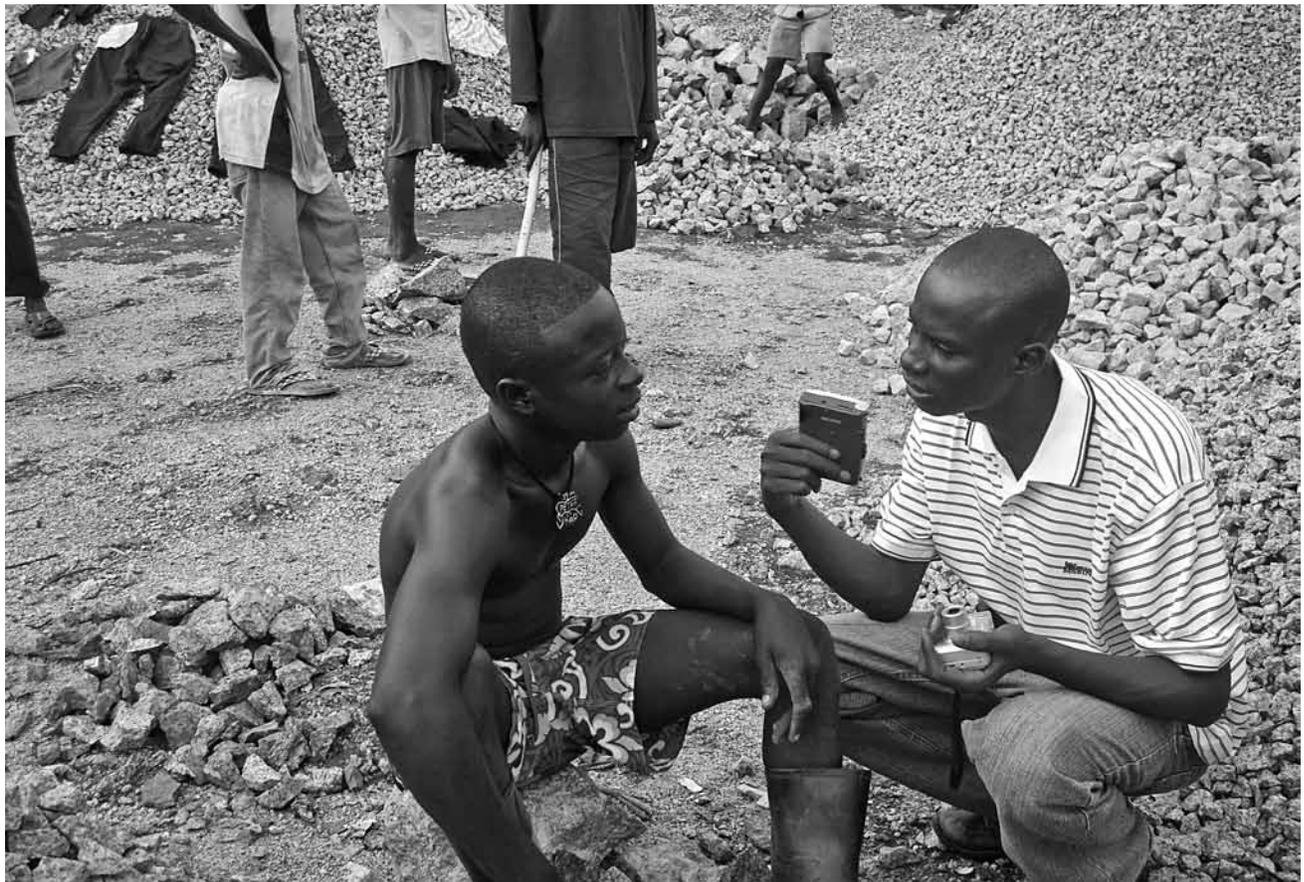

However, television channels inspired by Ivoirians are making their appearance on the Internet. Furthermore, competition between Internet service providers and mobile telephone operators enabled Ivoirians to obtain and use new technologies at attractive prices.



COTE D'IVOIRE

Côte d'Ivoire's social and political climate remained calm in 2009. The country had fallen into civil war in 2002, which led to a partition between two factions. The terms of the March 2007 peace agreement signed between the two have held. However, a delay in the elections originally planned for October 16, 2009 raised doubts over the sincerity of political will to resolve the crisis, and the media reflected this uncertainty.

Despite the effects of the turmoil, Côte d'Ivoire has demonstrated a commitment to defending freedom of speech and promoting the freedom of the press. In addition to Côte d'Ivoire's fundamental law upholding the freedom of speech, the laws on print and broadcast media adopted in 2004 are considered fairly strong. Adding to those strengths in the past year, various components of the media industry succeeded in reorganizing. The long-awaited Press Support and Development Fund became operational, as did the Joint Press and Media Identity Card Commission. During the year, the fund made its first grants in the form of subsidies to press enterprises. Additionally, the government allowed media businesses a three-year tax break to help them organize and improve the economic environment of the sector.

However, to date, only the radio sector has succeeded in making full use of Côte d'Ivoire's press freedom. The government has granted 100 or so licenses to radio stations, and community radio stations in particular. In the five years since the radio and television media law passed, not one private television channel has gone on the air, indicating that the country lags behind some others in the subregion. However, television channels inspired by Ivoirians are making their appearance on the Internet. Furthermore, competition between Internet service providers and mobile telephone operators enabled Ivoirians to obtain and use new technologies at attractive prices.

A striking indication of Côte d'Ivoire's media's future is the proliferation of cybercafés in larger towns and all parts of Abidjan, and the number and zeal of cybercafé patrons. The popularity of the Internet, which has become an essential source of information, is proving to be formidable competition for the print media. Internet users pay XOF 200 (about \$0.40) for an hour of Internet access—less than the price of a daily newspaper.

However, the panelists found that observance of professional standards is far from satisfactory; relatively low scores for Objective 2, professional journalism, brought down the overall country score. All other objectives scored higher than the overall country score.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE AT A GLANCE

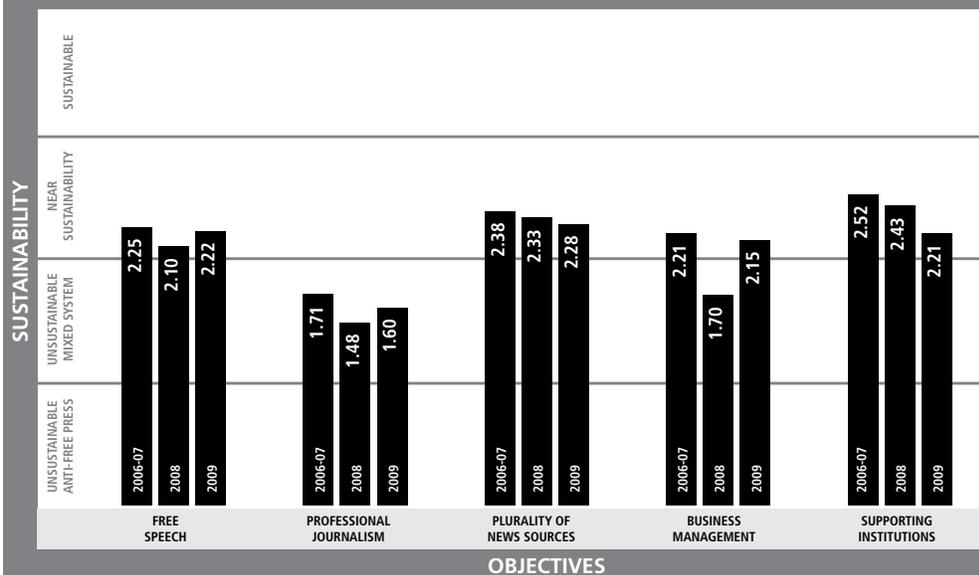
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 21,058,798 (July 2010 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Yamoussoukro
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Akan 42.1%, Voltaiques or Gur 17.6%, Northern Mandes 16.5%, Krous 11%, Southern Mandes 10%, other 2.8% (includes 130,000 Lebanese and 14,000 French) (1998 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Muslim 38.6%, Christian 32.8%, indigenous 11.9%, none 16.7% (2008 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages:** French (official), 60 native dialects with Dioula the most widely spoken (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2009-Atlas):** \$22.42 million (World Bank Development Indicators, 2010)
- > **GNI per capita (2009-PPP):** \$1,640 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2010)
- > **Literacy rate:** 48.7% (male 60.8%, female 38.6%) (2000 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** President Laurent Gbagbo (since October 26, 2000)

MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:**
Print: 22 daily newspapers, 58 others, 8 periodicals (National Council of the Press); Radio Stations: 5 national and about 100 local; Television Stations: 3 (including 1 fee-based)
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** Top three by circulation: *Fraternité Matin* (circulation: 6,824,333), *Soir Info* (circulation: 4,904,498); *Le Nouveau Réveil* (circulation: 3,733,010) (National Council of the Press 2006)
- > **Broadcast ratings:** N/A
- > **News agencies:** Ivorian Press Agency (state-owned)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** N/A
- > **Internet usage:** 660,000 (2008 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: CÔTE D'IVOIRE



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

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

Unsustainable Mixed System (1-2):

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

Near Sustainability (2-3):

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

Sustainable (3-4):

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

OBJECTIVE 1: FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Côte d'Ivoire Objective Score: 2.22

Free speech is guaranteed in Côte d'Ivoire. Articles 9 and 10 of the Ivoirian constitution state that the freedom of thought and expression, including the freedom of conscience and of religious and philosophical opinion, are guaranteed to all, and citizens have the right to freely express and disseminate their ideas. Additional supportive legislation encourages private initiative, while reaffirming the freedom of expression, and the Ivoirian government has also ratified various related international legal instruments. Furthermore, the 2004 law liberalizing the sector and eliminating jail sentences was a significant gain for media professionals. As Silué Salimata Konaté, a journalist at Côte d'Ivoire National Radio, put it, getting rid of the fear of imprisonment helped improve the freedom of speech overall.

However, the question of whether legislation encourages the freedom of speech raised some discussion among the panelists. Touré-Diabaté Ténin, a professor and chair of the Network of African Muslim Women, Côte d'Ivoire section, gave a minimal score, citing many constraints. She recalled that in 2008, she organized a study on the media in the urban environment, and the results painted a fairly negative picture of freedom of expression. In light of that study, she said that she feels sure that many violations of freedom never come to light, and she concluded that freedom of speech and access to public information are in fact very limited.

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.

The Ivoirian state granted relief to the media sector as a form of indirect assistance with four tax items...

The panelists agreed also that the sector is still quite restrictive from the point of view of radio and television promoters. Charles Sanga, a journalist and the director of publication and editor-in-chief of *Le Patriote*, said that radio stations cannot operate properly because they are subjected to so many constraints and because radio and television legislation is not liberalized yet.

Obtaining a radio or television broadcasting frequency is subject to a call for applications under the sector's regulatory body, the National Broadcast Media Council. For the time being, only the radio sector has been successful: The council has granted about 100 concessions to radio broadcasters, with community stations favored. Although five years have passed since the government enacted the radio and television media law, no private television channels have gone on the air. In this respect, Côte d'Ivoire compares negatively to some of its neighbors. On a positive note, more Ivoirian television channels are cropping up on the Internet.

For print media, publication directors do not necessarily have to be professional journalists; any backer of a title needs only to go through the formalities of notifying the district attorney.

However, the National Press Council is tasked with regulating the press sector. It brought approximately 40 cases against media outlets in 2009 regarding whether the outlets had been constituted legally and questioning the legality of the outlets' articles of association. Six press enterprises were called before the council for failing to follow the correct procedures to create a press outlet.

The panelists all hailed the tax authority's initiative to exempt press enterprises for a three-year period. The Ivoirian state granted relief to the media sector as a form of indirect assistance with four tax items: the tax on industrial and commercial profits or minimum flat-rate tax; the tax on real estate holdings, with the exception of buildings that are rented out; the domestic contribution to the economic, cultural, and social development of the nation using local personnel; and arrears on taxes due as of December 31, 2008.

The panelists noted that since the March 4, 2007 signing of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement to restore peace and reunify the country, journalists and media outlets have seen a noticeable lull in attacks. However, Francis Domo of the National Press Council countered that in 2009, there

Barthélemy Kouamé, chair of the Côte d'Ivoire Network of Online Press Professionals, was emphatic: State employees and all those who are required to disclose public information are not really making the necessary effort to provide such information.

had in fact been serious attacks on media freedom. He pointed to *Le Nouveau Réveil*, whose editorial offices were besieged and wrecked by young demonstrators for its ties to the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire–African Democratic Rally, the opposition party of former President Henri Konan Bédié. That crime has resulted in no prosecutions. Domo also described the case of a journalist that had not only received death threats, but narrowly escaped being lynched. That case has seen no prosecutions, either, as with so many other cases. Similarly, members of the Akoudan Oufilé association besieged the premises of *Notre Voie* on the grounds that the paper had published articles about complaints by disgruntled association members. *Notre Voie* is the newspaper of the party in power, the Ivoirian Popular Front.

In its annual report, the National Press Council logged various attacks that occurred throughout 2009 against the exercise of freedom of expression. Incidents recorded include journalists that were hauled before the courts, physically attacked, threatened, and even suffered attempted lynchings.

Youssef Sylla, a freelance journalist and press correspondent for the Central Region (the area besieged by the former rebellion), described the improved situation in his home of Bouaké, the country's second city. Until recently, journalists working in the area could expect some warlords, who did not appreciate criticism, to react in a certain way, although not in any institutionalized manner. But in all of 2009, journalists there reported no particular impediments to their work.

Also in 2009, authorities freed the French journalist Jean Paul Ney. Ney is an independent reporter-photographer who was thrown into an Ivoirian jail in January 2008 for conspiracy against state security. He was released at the end of a working visit by the Alain Joyandet, the French secretary of state for cooperation with Francophone countries. Côte d'Ivoire President Laurent Gbagbo granted audience to the secretary, and the Appeals Court in Abidjan released Ney on bail. His freeing also meant the release of six others, who had been detained with him as part of the same case.

The panelists judged that the authorities need to do more to facilitate access to public information sources, but

acknowledged that the government has made significant progress in that regard. Adama Koné, a journalist at *Fraternité Matin* and member of the Francophone Press Union, said that he is all in favor of the developing trend of sources organizing conferences and press briefings to share information. During 2009, quite a few events led to press conferences; for example, the prosecutor in the Café-Cacao embezzlement affair gave press briefings. The panelists emphasized that nothing like that has ever been seen before in Côte d'Ivoire, and they consider it a sign of progress.

Also, the panelists said that the difficulties that journalists face in accessing sources of information do not always seem to be related to their publications' editorial lines. Sanga, speaking as editor-in-chief of *Le Patriote*, said that he has difficulties getting at facts concerning information and communication technologies in Côte d'Ivoire, even though a member of the party with which *Le Patriote* is affiliated leads the relevant ministry.

Barthélemy Kouamé, chair of the Côte d'Ivoire Network of Online Press Professionals, was emphatic: State employees and all those who are required to disclose public information are not really making the necessary effort to provide such information. For example, 1998 is often the latest year available for statistics.

Clearly, journalists sometimes experience serious obstacles in accessing public information. Information from some key sectors of the national economy (such as coffee, cocoa, and crude oil production) has proven especially difficult to access. Many state employees prefer to hide behind a hypothetical need for authorization from higher up to avoid opening up to journalists, panelists said. At the same time, the public administration is attempting to use information and communication technologies to raise the profile of its own activities. Practically every ministerial department and all the major directorates in the public administration now have their own websites—though many are not updated regularly.

Access to media careers could be considered free. In addition to the public Institute of Media Sciences and Technologies, many large private colleges provide training in media. For some Ivoirians, the cost of registering in those institutions restricts freedom of access. This leads to quite a few journalists opting for on-the-job training after their first few years at university. The press law stipulates that to be considered a professional journalist, one must have either a *diplôme supérieur* (postgraduate degree) from a professional journalism college; a license (bachelor's degree) plus two years of vocational training in journalism; or a *maîtrise* (master's degree) or equivalent qualification, plus one year of vocational training in a journalism college recognized by the state or a one-year vocational internship.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Côte d'Ivoire Objective Score: 1.60

The average score awarded for this objective shows very little progress in professional practice since the 2008 study, and remains well below the overall country score.

Emmanuel Akani, member of the Ivorian Movement of Consumers of the Côte d'Ivoire Media,¹ said that many titles on the market have ties to political parties, and that such influence detracts a great deal from objectivity and quality. Although a newspaper's closeness to a particular political party should not affect professionalism, he said, frequently consumers cannot get past the first few lines of an article without tossing the paper aside because the writer did not follow rules of professional ethics and conduct.

In 1992, Côte d'Ivoire media members adopted a professional code, which the Observatory of Press Freedom, Ethics, and Standards (known by its French acronym, OLPED) attempted to promote. However, according to OLPED's own analysis, a vast majority of journalists do not attach much importance to these rules that they set voluntarily for themselves.

Sanga recognized that many newspapers have low standards, but argued that it is possible to stand up for particular political policies and stay objective, and newspapers can choose not to distort the facts while remaining free to comment.

¹ Mouvement ivoirien des consommateurs des œuvres de presse de Côte d'Ivoire

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).

Sanga recognized that many newspapers have low standards, but argued that it is possible to stand up for particular political policies and stay objective, and newspapers can choose not to distort the facts while remaining free to comment.

In 2009, the National Press Council imposed 150 findings against daily papers and 108 against weeklies for professional misconduct. Punishments ranged from simple warnings to official reprimands for misdemeanors, including professional disloyalty, insulting the head of the state, incitement to revolt or violence, and outrage against public morality. There were also about 40 reports from readers for non-publication of the right of reply, as required by law.

In its annual report, the office of the National Press Council chair indicated that the council recorded a total of 315 breaches of professional rules by the print media. In response to the most serious complaints, the council suspended five press outlets, imposed fines on five outlets, and issued 95 official reprimands and 98 warnings, along with more than 25 formal notices and 86 summonses. In 2009, *Le National* received the most citations, with 15 official warnings. *Le Temps* (which is close to the ruling party) and *Le Nouveau Réveil* (with ties to the opposition) racked up 11 warnings each.

The council's goal in imposing disciplinary sanctions was to rein in the errors and steer the press toward more professional behavior. Notably, however, the council implemented only one suspension decision (against *Le National*, for one month). Four one-month suspensions of two dailies and one-month suspensions of two weeklies were withdrawn. Previously, the council had shown reluctance to go beyond reprimands and warnings; the 2009 suspensions represent a more serious effort to address professional lapses.

Josette Barry, editor-in-chief of education at the government daily *Fraternité Matin*, dismissed many newspapers as rags, and the panelists agreed that in general, the quality of journalistic writing and investigative work in many papers has declined over the years, including at *Fraternité Matin*. Barry said that to address the faltering adherence to professional standards at her paper, managers have held dozens of seminars. She noted that more and more other newspapers are following suit, but the quality remains mediocre at many papers.

The panelists also pointed to an agreement between the Group of Press Publishers of Côte d'Ivoire (known by its

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French acronym, GEPCI) and the National Private Press Union (known by its French acronym, SYNAPPCI). The agreement aims to apply the Inter-professional Collective Convention, which has been in force for several years. However, it did not prove possible to implement the agreement to apply the convention before the grace period ran out. A new round of negotiations is underway between the two parties, with the National Press Council mediating.

Without the protection of the Collective Convention, salaries for journalists varied a great deal between one house and the next during 2009. Barely a third of the 15 or so press outlets that publish dailies paid their journalists salaries equal to or higher than the minimum standard set forth under the convention. The panelists agreed that given the poor pay, many Ivorian journalists are insecure financially.

In terms of the state of equipment and facilities, the panelists noted a positive development in 2009. After 20 years with no sign of support from the Press Support and Development Fund, media businesses and professional press organizations received subsidies worth XOF 243 million (around \$500,000) in the form of office equipment (computers, scanners, printers, etc.) and vehicles.

As reported in the 2008 MSI, generally self-censorship can be traced to political or economic ties. Political themes dominate reporting, at the expense of including more topics concerning societal issues.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

Côte d'Ivoire Objective Score: 2.28

With about 20 daily newspapers, nearly 40 weeklies, and about 100 local radio stations, in addition to the international radio and television channels that can be picked up in Côte d'Ivoire, a reasonable plurality of news sources exists. The proliferation of cybercafés in all parts of Abidjan and other

major towns are an obvious sign of the growing accessibility to various sources of information.

Apart from the "neighborhood radio stations" and religious-based stations, the radio and television landscape is made up of four public channels (two radio and two television channels), two private radio stations (Radio Jam and Radio Nostalgia), one United Nations radio station (Onuci FM), and one international encrypted television station (Horizon Channel). In addition, Ivorians have access on FM to the principal international radio stations (RFI, VOA, and BBC). In addition, during 2009, Italian investors made a submission to the minister of communication for approval to set up a new television channel for Africa based in Côte d'Ivoire.

The panelists agreed that Ivorians are free to obtain information from various sources, both domestic and international (apart from the payment of a fee to watch the encrypted television channel). The panelists agreed that poverty more than legal barriers hampers access to news. However, Ivorians are benefiting from competition between Internet service providers and mobile communications operators, as they offer new technologies at improving prices. As noted in the 2008 MSI, newspaper distribution is unreliable, and especially in the north, people turn to satellite dishes to obtain international news.

Sylla, speaking as a press correspondent working in Bouaké, noted that the supply of programming in the center of the country includes stations that came on the air in the midst of the political crisis of 2002 and played a role in its history. He pointed out that Bouaké's TV *Notre Patrie* offers programming independent of the national channel. The

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.

station enjoys relative freedom, he said, but stressed that the situation in Bouaké is somewhat unusual. The creation of radio and television stations there, in so-called rebel zone, could be considered one positive benefit of the crisis. These stations, founded without any form of authorization from the National Broadcast Media Council and thus illegally, continue to operate more or less unobstructed.

Barry explained that at the beginning of the crisis, a whole swath of Côte d'Ivoire functioned somewhat separately. UNICEF and UNDP collaborated with several international NGOs and the unauthorized radio and television stations to organize awareness-raising activities. After the war broke out, the United Nations system worked with the unauthorized stations because Ivoirian Radio and Television could not be received in the rebel-occupied zone. Created at first as an informal solution, this collaboration slowly became more formal and official.

Regarding the public media, the panelists were nearly unanimous that public outlets do not reflect the full diversity of political opinion. For example, at the beginning of 2009, the National Press Council had to remind the government daily, *Fraternité Matin*, of its mission as a public medium—which includes ensuring the observance of the principle of equitable access to the public media during electoral campaigns (originally set for October 16, 2009).

The panelists were somewhat divided on the question of transparency of media ownership. Even if a publication's masthead states who is legally responsible for a periodical, i.e., the director of publication, in some cases, that person is just the tip of the iceberg. The true backer is often someone with political ties. The law forbids that practice, and it obligates newspapers to publish the names of directors and members of governing bodies every year, along with the list of shareholders and the amount of shares they hold. However, the panelists noted that every press enterprise completely ignores this particular provision of the law.

As readers find it impossible to discern true owners at first glance, they must rely on the predominant color of the headlines and the front page to identify the newspaper's place on the political chessboard. Ivoirian media are split between the blues (papers belonging or close to the party in power) and colors used by the rest—the independents and those close to the opposition. Akani said firmly that ownership is not transparent. The true owners hide behind fronts, and in his view, the law should pave the way for greater ease in determining the true owner without having to use the court system.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Côte d'Ivoire Objective Score: 2.15

Thanks to the National Press Council's efforts to clean up the sector, all the titles now published in Côte d'Ivoire are produced in compliance with the conditions required by the law. From an economic point of view, the press is emerging from a more informal state, where it had languished for many years.

Even so, in the panelists' view, most outlets are still far from profitable. In 2009, the overall circulation of publications (daily, weekly, etc.) was around 40 million copies. The total revenue was XOF 4,201,480,355 (around \$8.5 million), 73 percent of which was for the daily press. Since 2007, the total circulation of dailies had been in constant decline, dropping from 37,263,661 copies in 2007 to 34,246,638 in 2008 and 30,689,994 in 2009.

The sector definitively generated significant combined revenue; nevertheless, given the number of companies in the market, very few publications managed to break even. In 2009 the press sector was locked in a bitter struggle, according to National Press Council figures, with 21 dailies, 43 weeklies, and 26 monthlies and bimonthlies. Of all the dailies, four dominated the market, pulling in 75 percent of sales.

In 2009, 29 new publications appeared on the market, while 23 publication titles died out. Longevity appears to be a major challenge; few titles have a lifespan beyond five years. Considering this, the panelists emphasized the need for press businesses to apply proper management rules—both in terms of accounting and human resources. Barry, for example,

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.

wondered how the accounting and financial practices of many press outlets would stack up against international standards. He questioned whether press houses hire proper professionals to carry out their accounting, marketing, and human resources functions, and whether they have rigorous personnel policies.

As a whole, the panelists deplored the way press outlets are managed. Koné noted that some press enterprises do not consider themselves full-fledged businesses. The press is the only sector in which practically anyone can approach the editor-in-chief for a job as a writer, he said, and added that people seem to view the press as a field for anyone to come and try their luck. Furthermore, there are indications that some press bosses dip into the company's funds to line their own pockets.

The panelists agreed that media receive income from a variety of sources. Even so, they said, there is good reason to fear that the covert subsidies that some newspapers receive affect content.

As the social climate has relaxed, advertisements in the various newspapers demonstrate an uptick in economic activity. The time appears to have passed when advertisers would steer clear of some titles out of fear of being accused of promoting the opposition. The frenzied competition between the mobile telephone operators in 2009 was reflected in inserts in the principal dailies and weeklies. Nevertheless, Domo judged that apart from *Fraternité Matin*, Ivoirian Radio and Television, *Le Patriote*, and *Notre Voie*, which were delighted to receive so much advertising, many other media outlets and newspapers are not benefiting from the advertising windfall at all. Also, as noted in last year's MSI, advertising does get in the way of editorial content.

The print media are facing serious competition from the Internet, which is booming in popularity and has become a vital information source. XOF 200 (about \$0.40)—less than the price of a daily newspaper—buys about an hour online, which is enough time to review all the web-based domestic press outlets. People visit Internet cafés in droves, impacting print sales further.

As noted above, press outlets and supporting institutions received subsidies in 2009 from the Press Support and Development Fund, in the form of equipment support and vehicles.

According to the panelists, approximately 25 media consultancy, publicity, and marketing agents are present in the Ivoirian market. As noted in last year's study, the media suffer from a lack of market research. Only a few media agencies carry out studies, and those are fragmented; and no companies carry out research before launching a title or

changing editorial policy. This is likely a major reason behind the short shelf life of so many publications. In addition, last year's panelists expressed the hope that the Press Support and Development Fund would address this shortcoming and help fund studies, but the 2009 panelists were not aware of any such progress so far.

Also noted in last year's report, broadcast media have no statistics available on audience size, though point studies are carried out to gauge the penetration of radio and television stations. For the print media, the National Press Council publishes quarterly figures on the number of copies on the market and the sales rates of each title.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Côte d'Ivoire Objective Score: 2.21

The media's support institutions are showing more and more organization. In addition to the National Union of Journalists of Côte d'Ivoire, established in 1991, active groups include GEPCI, SYNAPPCI, and the National Confederation of Publication Directors of Côte d'Ivoire. A new umbrella organization came on the scene in 2009: the Organization of Professional Journalists of Côte d'Ivoire, alongside the Network of Women Journalists of Côte d'Ivoire.

Ostensibly, these organizations were all involved in efforts to help professionalize the sector and to improve working conditions in 2009. Toward this end, they could depend on the profession's self-regulatory bodies: National Broadcast Media Council for the broadcast media, the National Press Council, and OLPED.

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.

Domo said that GEPCI was instrumental in prodding the government to put the Support and Development Fund into action and bringing about the tax exemptions (both discussed above). He said after years of talk, it was ultimately GEPCI that stood up for the interests of press businesses and lobbied to have the subsidies distributed.

Panelists differed regarding the involvement of civil society organizations in defending press freedom. Paul Oussou, first deputy chair of the Study and Research Group on Democracy and Economic and Social Development in Africa, Côte d'Ivoire section, said that his organization has taken a clear stance in support of the freedom of speech and the freedom of the press. He pointed to his organization's work with the journalists' association on a number of activities, such as press monitoring, as proof of his organization's interest and involvement. However, the panelists agreed that not all NGOs are helpful for the media, and some actually do more harm than good.

Some civil society organizations serve as sounding boards for voices that want to shackle the freedom of expression; others are simply more focused on other issues, panelists said. Barry emphasized that at particular points in Côte d'Ivoire's history, some NGOs have been very active. Curiously enough, in 2009, those same NGOs did very little in favor of press freedom, panelists said. They added that it is also important to draw distinctions between NGOs and politically motivated groups. For example, some associations support political parties and react only when a political party newspaper is in trouble.

In Abidjan, many private schools provide training in media but not always specifically in the profession of journalism. For 20 years or so, Ivorian journalists have trained primarily on the job, and generally in the private sector. The Institute of Media Sciences and Technologies, under the auspices of the Ministry of Communication, is the only public institution of its kind in the media sector. Access to the Institute of Media Sciences and Technologies is open to any applicants who pass the relevant entrance exam.

The panelists agreed that journalists have various in-service training possibilities as well. Some professional organizations held capacity-building workshops in 2009 and seminars for journalists in partnership with international groups.

Given the difficult working conditions in many press houses, staff turnover is high, indicating a need for a human resources strategy overhaul. Without attention to human resources and retention, the heads of press businesses will continue to have trouble deriving any benefit from providing training and continuing education opportunities for their staff, panelists said. Without such a strategy, the most

experienced staff members will continue to be tempted to cash in on their know-how by moving to more lucrative fields.

As noted in last year's MSI, printing presses are experiencing somewhat of a decline. Two houses that had printed their own titles now subcontract their printing, and of seven rotary printers that shared the domestic market a few years ago, only four are left operating.

On the distribution side, a single company, Edipresse, is involved. Other attempts at distribution have fizzled out, plagued by high unsold return rates.

List of Panel Participants

Josette Barry, journalist, editor-in-chief of education, *Fraternité Matin*, Abidjan

Adama Koné, journalist, *Fraternité Matin*; Union de la Presse Francophone, Abidjan

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Barthélemy Kouamé, chair, Côte d'Ivoire Network of Online Press Professionals, Abidjan

Charles Sanga, journalist, director of publication and editor-in-chief, *Le Patriote*, Abidjan

Silué Salimata Konaté, journalist, Côte d'Ivoire National Radio, Abidjan

Youssef Sylla, freelance journalist, press correspondent for the Central Region, Bouaké

Paul Oussou, Study and Research Group on Democracy and Economic and Social Development in Africa, Côte d'Ivoire section, Abidjan

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