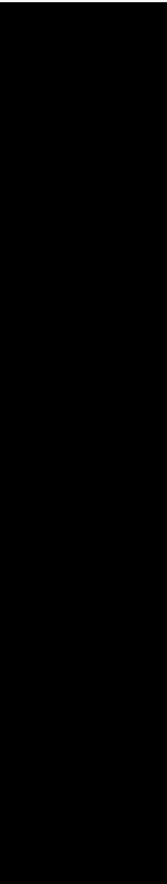

The closure of Viva, a national television station belonging to the mayor of the capital, sparked the turmoil in early December 2008.



MADAGASCAR

Madagascar was shaken by an unprecedented political crisis in 2009. Opposition members overthrew President Marc Ravalomanana. Ongoing strikes and demonstrations followed, resulting in huge economic losses for the country, unemployment for thousands of workers, and widespread insecurity.

The closure of Viva, a national television station belonging to Antananarivo's mayor, sparked the turmoil in early December 2008. Viva ran afoul of the Ravalomanana government by broadcasting an interview with the former president, Didier Ratsiraka, in which he criticized Ravalomanana. The mayor, Andry Rajoelina, emerged as the natural opposition leader and a champion of freedom of expression and democracy. Rajoelina presented the government with an ultimatum to reopen his television station by January 13, 2009—and when the ultimatum failed, opposition members launched a general strike. After months of the strike, and a series of often-violent demonstrations that resulted in more than 80 casualties, the military took control on March 17, 2009. Days later, Rajoelina was installed as president of the Transition High Authority.

The international community denounced the turn of events as an unacceptable coup, and no foreign heads of state or diplomats attended the inauguration. The significant economic and social aftermath included a loss of 3,700 trade and service jobs. After Rajoelina came to power, demonstrations and the strike persisted—but this time initiated by ousted President Ravalomanana's supporters. A climate of insecurity prevailed, with the army carrying out regular crackdowns. The people seemed to be left to their own devices, not knowing whether they still had a government, or anarchy. The international community worked to help Madagascar find acceptable consensus-based solutions, but largely without success.

The violence has affected journalists deeply. In the first quarter of 2009, Ravalomanana's government continually harassed journalists and media that featured news on the opposition, including Viva and Antsiva radio stations. Meanwhile, at the peak of the strike movement, demonstrators targeted pro-government media specifically. Arsonists attacked national channels, including RNM and TVM; MBS radio and television channels; and other media organizations belonging to president Ravalomanana's TIKO group, such as Radio Mada and *Le Quotidien* newspaper. In the second quarter of 2009, the situation quieted down somewhat, but retaliation continued against media.

The crisis has had some positive effects, however; the public has a revived appetite for news, and blogging is on the rise as a forum for serious political debate.

The loss in overall MSI score reflects how seriously the political crisis has threatened media sustainability. All objectives except for Objective 4, business management, lost ground and fell into the "unsustainable, mixed system" score category.

MADAGASCAR AT A GLANCE

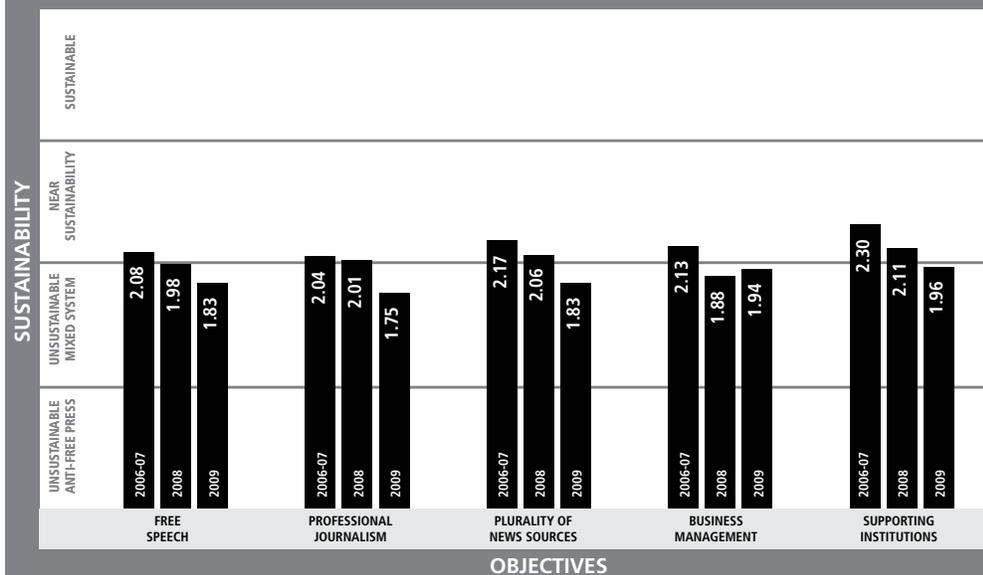
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 20,653,556 (July 2010 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Antananarivo
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Malayo-Indonesian (Merina and related Betsileo), Cotiers (mixed African, Malayo-Indonesian, and Arab ancestry - Betsimisaraka, Tsimihety, Antaisaka, Sakalava), French, Indian, Creole, Comoran (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** indigenous beliefs 52%, Christian 41%, Muslim 7% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages (% of population):** English (official), French (official), Malagasy (official) (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2009-Atlas):** \$7.932 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2010)
- > **GNI per capita (2009-PPP):** \$1,050 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2010)
- > **Literacy rate:** 68.9% (male 75.5%, female 62.5%) (2003 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** President Andry Rajoelina (since March 18, 2009)

MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** 254 radio stations, with 26 public stations (including the central and regional levels); 37 television channels, with 6 public channels (including the central and regional levels); 12 daily newspapers (with 5 partially in French and 1 entirely in French), 19 bi-weekly, 20 weekly, 12 bi-monthly, 21 monthly, 4 bimonthly and 14 quarterly. (http://www.ambafrance-mada.org/article.php3?id_article=269)
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics: top three by circulation:** *Midi-Madagascar* (30,511), *Tribune Madagascar* (15,000), *Express de Madagascar* (15,000); about 200,000 daily copies total for entire country (sources: various local newspapers)
- > **Broadcast ratings:** highest-rated television outlets: Télévision Nationale Malagasy (state-owned), Radio Nationale Malagasy (state-owned), Madagascar Broadcasting System (private television and radio stations)
- > **News agencies:** ANTA (public), MADA (private)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** N/A
- > **Internet usage:** 316,100 (2008 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: MADAGASCAR



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

Madagascar Objective Score: 1.83

Generally, the constitutional provisions, laws, and regulations in Madagascar have not changed and do promote freedom of speech. But in practice, they apply only to the needs of the government in place, panelists said. Due to the political developments, this objective's score fell slightly to 1.83 from 1.98 last year. All indicators scored within a half-point of the objective score, evidence that all components that underpin a free speech environment have been affected.

The panelists agreed that opening a radio or television station is a free, fair, competitive, and non-political process, if the interested party meets the requisite conditions. The true problem relates to closures, panelists said. Despite the relative freedom to launch outlets, the political decisions of the ruling party always threaten print and electronic media somehow. This is a controversial subject, according to Jean Paul Razafimahatratra, a journalist at RNM. He pointed to the closure of Viva television that sparked the political crisis as an example. Radio Mada was closed down in a similarly violent fashion, at the behest of the new government.

Despite the existence of laws that guarantee freedom of speech, the 2009 crisis shook the journalism community profoundly. With insufficient legal protection, journalists worked in constant fear, according to Nanou Fiankinana of UNDP. During the 2009 crisis, persecution and criminal

For example, during this period of crisis, journalists did not wear any badges, maintaining anonymity in their movements. Sidonie Rahaingomalala, a MATV journalist, said that people opposing a journalist's work are likely to manhandle the journalist or destroy equipment, and journalists have little defense.

actions increased against journalists and media outlets, according to Jean Eric Rakotoarisoa, editorial director of *Dans les Médias de Demain*. Violence started with arson and looting of the national radio station, RNM, and the national television station, TVM—both considered allies of the Rajoelina government. Then, MBS, owned by the president, was ransacked, looted, and burned, according to Razafimahatratra.

Those events were merely the beginning of brutalities and persecutions that all contributed to muzzling the press, according to Tiburce Soavinarivo, journalist at Radio Fahazavana. For example, during this period of crisis, journalists did not wear any badges, maintaining anonymity in their movements. Sidonie Rahaingomalala, a MATV journalist, said that people opposing a journalist's work are likely to manhandle the journalist or destroy equipment, and journalists have little defense. Regional journalists fled to the capital after receiving death threats from politicians and their supporters, according to Stephenson Ravoajanahary, a journalist at TV Manakara. This created intense pressure on journalists, who also had to cope with the growing demands of readers as a result of competition and turn of events, said Rahaga Ramaholimihaso, president and CEO of Societe Malgache d'Édition.

Razafimahatratra said that journalistic freedom depends on the priorities and leanings of press bosses. During 2009, managers' influence was significant; many of them had political interests to defend. Journalists were not free, and have become almost like robots, Soavinarivo said. The media became political "weapons," as some journalists processed only information in favor of certain political camps, and sometimes made up stories to denigrate the opposing side. Viva and Antsiva conveyed a pro-Rajoelina stance, while MBS, Radio Mada, and others supported the pro-Ravalomanana position. In spite of some positive progress, the government in place still influenced the editorial lines of RNM and TVM. At the beginning of this year, those outlets gave preferential

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.

Under Ravalomanana, the MBS benefited from easy access to information. Today, Viva is given preferential treatment.

treatment to information and news from the Ravalomanana camp, then shifted to favor the Rajoelina-led Transition High Authority in April.

National media such as RNM and TVM have always been given preferential treatment, whichever the government. In these public media, journalists feel compelled to put up with the rulers' decisions at the risk of being transferred, suspended, or banned to speak on the air. Panelists pointed also to a few cases in which only private journalists connected to the government benefit, to the detriment of even the national channel. In these cases, national channels are forced to rebroadcast the programs that the favored private outlet produces.

As last year's MSI reported, in cases of libel, the courts may take administrative or penal actions, including possible prison sentences. However, no journalists have yet received prison time for libel against public officials or other actors, as far as the panelists are aware.

Regarding access to public information, private media always fare poorly in comparison with public media. For example, Rahaingomalala said, private media have much more difficulty obtaining interviews with ministry officials. When private media do not cover the news that the government promotes, those outlets are declared biased and supportive of the opposition, and sometimes threatened. Rakotoarisoa said that an overall lack of administrative transparency was evident particularly during the political crisis. Faly Rajaonarison, a journalist at *Les Nouvelles*, emphasized that historically, a pool of journalists has always been given more advantages than others. Under Ravalomanana, the MBS benefited from easy access to information. Today, Viva is given preferential treatment.

Access to international news sources is free from government restrictions in Madagascar. However, some journalists do not tap international sources as much as they could, due either to the cost of access or a lack of motivation.

Entry into the profession is considered free in Madagascar; the Madagascar Journalists Association (known by its French acronym, OJM) issues membership cards through an independent commission. While in principle journalists receive a card after at least three years of service, in practice the process is more fluid. Last year's panelists objected to the ease of entry and called for stricter criteria, noting that many

people claim to be journalists but lack appropriate skills. They cited the example of a person hired to broadcast music at a regional radio station and who eventually became a de facto journalist.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Madagascar Objective Score: 1.75

Objective 2 fared the worst of all objectives in 2009, as the panelists concurred that professional standards are too weak. Individually, all indicators scored similarly poorly, as all were within a half-point of the objective score.

This year brought an uptick in the population's interest in political news, as the need to stay informed sharpened during the crisis. Unfortunately, the quality of information that journalists provided was spoiled by their eagerness to give the latest news fast, without double-checking and analysis. According to the panelists, journalists did not bother to document their work, and slip-ups were noted as a result of haste, passion, or inexperience. Some made serious allegations during the 2009 crisis; journalists mixed up their roles with those of militants, said Rakotoarisoa. Sometimes, radio stations broadcast words of hatred, humiliation, and anger rather than balanced news for information and education, Razafimahatratra said.

Ramaholimihaso offered a slightly different perspective, noting that in some cases, the intensified pressure of reporting through a political crisis brought about improvements, especially in searching for information.

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).

At press conferences, often journalists fail to ask substantive questions. Frequently, journalists simply reproduce press releases without any analysis, said Rajaonarison.

The panelists also criticized the lack of compliance with ethics standards. They said that increasingly, journalists no longer play the role of informant, communicator, and educator. They said that the primary ethics obligation of a journalist is to provide the audience with clear, complete, objective, and honest information. Yet unfortunately, a number of journalists cannot resist pressures, said Rahaingomalala. News becomes slanderous, which exacerbates societal tensions, added Soavinarivo.

In some circumstances, self-censorship exists as well. Some self-censorship is linked to the editorial priorities and interests of media managers, Rajaonarison commented. Soavinarivo added that some self-censorship is related to societal expectations; journalists are aware that they should not broach certain subjects.

In general, Malagasy media do not address key issues, in part because of limited resources. Rahaingomalala noted that sometimes ministries and large organizations are reluctant to share information, as they have little trust in journalists. According to Fiankinana, journalists certainly lack the means to report on major issues, but problems stem also from journalists' gaps in capacity to process the issues. For example, after a hailstorm in Antsirabe, a reporter wrote a story about the possible effects of climate change but did not treat the subject in a scientific fashion—just as a news brief. Some media outlets have sections full of figures, but do not delve thoroughly into analysis.

According to Rajaonarison, the lack of professionalism is explained partially by the relatively low salaries for journalists. Generally, journalist salaries do not allow free and independent practice. Often, entrepreneurial media owners want to “sell” their information quickly and with lower production costs, and they take on graduates fresh out of school that are willing to work for very little pay. However, the private media have made a marked improvement in salaries. The increase is certainly not enough, Rahaingomalala said, but it demonstrates a significant effort to prevent journalists from selling articles.

For public media workers, salary depends on the journalist's status—whether he or she is a regular government official, long-term employee, short-term employee, or temporary hire. Those with less job security or benefits sometimes give in to corruption, according to Razafimahatratra. Some journalists are not even members of the local social security scheme, noted James Ratsimandresy of RNM/TVM Fianarantsoa. Soavinarivo added that such individuals top the list of corrupted journalists.

According to Fiankinana, journalists certainly lack the means to report on major issues, but problems stem also from journalists' gaps in capacity to process the issues. For example, after a hailstorm in Antsirabe, a reporter wrote a story about the possible effects of climate change but did not treat the subject in a scientific fashion—just as a news brief.

Regarding the balance between entertainment and news, last year's MSI described media managers' perception that people were losing interest in news and politics, tipping the balance toward entertainment. At the same time that this year's political crisis renewed interest in news, out of necessity, the media has become more profit-driven. As a result, for the print and electronic media, increasing advertisements is often tantamount to increasing entertainment programs, at the expense of news. Some television channels even advertise during the news, which Rajaonarison charged is out of place. Similarly, in the print press, advertisements are encroaching on the space for news articles. Some press organizations are able to increase the number of pages, depending on the number of advertisements received, in order to preserve enough space for news.

As reported in the last MSI, national-level media have seen a technological revolution, with modern equipment used increasingly. At the regional level, however, quality still varies.

Niche reporting is still rare, limited by the lack of means to invest in training journalists to become specialized. Usually, such reporting is only possible if an NGO or other private institution supports the effort. The panelists pointed to a special need for journalists trained in economics and law; currently, journalists with some background studies in those fields help to fill in gaps, but their contributions are not enough.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

Madagascar Objective Score: 1.83

Panelists gave lower scores to this objective this year, and all indicators save one scored very close to the objective score. The one exception is indicator 4 (independent news agencies gather and distribute news for print and broadcast media), which scored about two-thirds of a point lower.

During the annual prayers between late July and early August in Ankaramalaza, in Vatovavy Fitovinany region, some people still expected the visit of former President Ravalomanana—and were rather stunned when President Rajoelina showed up instead.

The panelists agreed that the people of Madagascar certainly have varied news sources. Residents of the main towns especially have a large array of newspapers and private radio stations and continually growing choices. Panelists noted the broadcast media's willingness to provide viewers with a mix of programs.

However, rural populations are underserved. Ravoajanahary shared an anecdote that revealed the extent of the news vacuum affecting some rural residents. During the annual prayers between late July and early August in Ankaramalaza, in Vatovavy Fitovinany region, some people still expected the visit of former President Ravalomanana—and were rather stunned when President Rajoelina showed up instead. Only public media offer full national coverage; however, because they are under government influence and dependent on politicians, they are unreliable sources of information for listeners in remote areas, Rahaingomalala said.

The government does not restrict citizen access to international and national media. Foreign radio stations,

such as Radio France International, are available, according to Ratsimandresy. However, the low purchasing power of the Malagasy tempers this access, Rakotoarisoa noted. Very few can afford to buy foreign magazines.

Madagascar has at least 20 national print press organizations, and to read news representing all political leanings, one would have to buy three or four newspapers and pay approximately MGA 2,000 (\$1)—which is out of reach for low-income people. Some newspapers are affordable, costing around MGA 200 (\$0.10) and are available exclusively in Malagasy. They include *Taratra*, *Ao Raha*, and *Gazetiko*. As for radio stations, for areas without electricity, the cost of one battery is equivalent to 1 kilogram of rice, Rajaonarison pointed out—too steep for most people.

Access to the Internet is free, but infrastructure is very limited and the cost of access is high. The only places that enjoy more or less reliable infrastructure are the capital; a few large towns; and development program beneficiaries, such the rural commune of Ranomafana, which runs the PACT-implemented and USAID-funded Last Mile Initiative. The cost varies: in some places within the capital, one hour of access costs MGA 900 (\$0.45), while in towns like Nosy Be, the cost might be six or seven times greater—close to MGA 6,000 (\$3). Mobile-telephone-based Internet is also expanding and covering more territory, but for the moment, the cost of hardware and connectivity is out of reach for the Malagasy people.

Public media are not public service media, and do not reflect the political spectrum's opinions, said Rakotoarisoa. The government in power is always favored. Much to their disappointment, members of the media community have not felt the changes that Rajoelina so strongly advocated in this regard. It appears that many actors, often close to the government, want to remain in the limelight—even if it means manipulating opinion through the media.

Currently, Madagascar has no operational independent news agencies to serve print or broadcast media. A majority of independent broadcasters produce their own news programs, dealing with the same news topics as the public media but providing a different perspective. Community radio stations are emerging in Fianarantsoa and elsewhere and are producing programs focused on local needs. Very often, these local stations provide support to development programs, such as the program that Saha Betsileo promotes in the rural commune of Alakamisy Ambohimaha, and Alt Radio in the Anosy and Androy regions.

Regarding the transparency of media ownership, as the 2008 MSI panelists reported, it is difficult to identify the majority shareholders in press businesses, but political leanings and affinities are identified easily.

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.

Minority languages are not an issue in Madagascar, as all citizens understand the official Malagasy language. However, radio and television stations in the regions produce programs in local/ethnic languages, which help stations remain in touch with their audiences.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Madagascar Objective Score: 1.94

The panelists expressed their view that independent media must be relatively well managed, because most survived—and in fact turned a profit—despite the political turmoil of 2009. However, significant challenges remain as reflected in a score that remains in the “unsustainable, mixed system” range. All indicators scored within a half-point of the objective score.

Madagascar has a few private media houses that do not seek commercial profitability but are used as political or denominational communications tools. For example, Radio Fahazavana is part of the communications strategy of the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar, with the TIKO group (an agribusiness conglomerate owned by Ravalomanana) contributing to payment of some expenses, such as salaries. RTV Manakara is owned by a politician, Rakamisilaha Martial, and although its revenues are not tremendous, the station is vital for the community’s political mobilization and some of Martial’s other economic activities. Sometimes, the press managers fail to understand that the media, with sound management, could be a profitable business, panelists said.

Soavinarivo emphasized that independent media may operate as cost-effective and profitable businesses but not necessarily

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.

Increasingly, professional communications agencies manage advertising, but most agencies are available just in the capital, Rakotoarisoa said. These agencies collaborate closely and professionally with both the private and public media. Advertisers in other big towns and regions still need to negotiate directly with the media.

professionally managed enterprises. While media houses receive revenue from many sources, including sponsorships, advertising constitutes a large portion of their revenues, according to Ratsimandresy. In fact, the panelists suggested, the dependence on advertising is so great that it may compromise objectivity when media houses report on major advertisers—including the government, large influential businesses, and international organizations.

Increasingly, professional communications agencies manage advertising, but most agencies are available just in the capital, Rakotoarisoa said. These agencies collaborate closely and professionally with both the private and public media. Advertisers in other big towns and regions still need to negotiate directly with the media. The number of advertisements sold depends on the media outlet’s credibility and visibility, according to Rahaingomalala, because advertisers, including communications agencies, target their media partners on the basis of these parameters.

The government never gives subsidies to private media, Rajaonarison said, and direct grants are not available. Tax exemption on media equipment is set forth in the Rome Convention, but this assistance is not granted automatically to everyone. For example, two journalists that import cars for their professional use will not benefit from the same treatment. If a journalist does not know how to negotiate, or is too critical of the government, his or her tax exemption request will be turned down.

Print media have commissioned surveys with private consulting firms specializing in audience rating analysis. They conduct surveys quarterly, with a view to reviewing the press company’s profitability and determining each press organization’s position compared with others, Rahaingomalala said. The problem lies in the reliability of a polling agency. It may distort data to attract more advertisers if the station is influential enough. Consulting firms only want to satisfy their customers, panelists commented.

Soavinarivo, however, criticized OJM for failing to suitably attempt to protect journalists. Statements are issued, but no actual protection results, he said. Furthermore, noted Rajaonarison, the association has never come forward to support any member facing legal action.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Madagascar Objective Score: 1.96

This objective also lost ground slightly compared to last year, and panelists rated all indicators rather similarly, with none scoring more than three-tenths of a point higher or lower than the objective score.

Madagascar has only one newspaper publishers' association, but generally it manages to defend its members' interests, according to the panelists. On the other hand, some other professional associations show a notable laxity and have not been as visible. The OJM has not been in a position to renew its committee membership, and a basic review should be conducted to work out with accuracy its mission and objectives, panelists said. Antananarivo-based Multi-Service Information Systems initiated an action to this end in late 2008, but the move lost momentum as a result of the political crisis. However, OJM is generally well regarded and panelists see it as the only institution able to bring journalists together.

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.

Soavinarivo, however, criticized OJM for failing to suitably attempt to protect journalists. Statements are issued, but no actual protection results, he said. Furthermore, noted Rajaonarison, the association has never come forward to support any member facing legal action. As evidence that OJM and other professional associations are not protecting journalists actively, the panelists mentioned the indictment of Evariste Ramanatsoavina, from radio Fahazavana, in the second quarter of 2009. Some journalists try to build solidarity for such causes.

Ramaholimihaso underscored the urgency to consider a true restructuring of the trade, but commented that the media community seems busy just managing daily issues. The biggest issue for the sector is the communication code, currently supported by UNDP and steered by a commission made up of former OJM chairs. An initiative has been formed to finalize the code, with steps including a technical workshop and a first meeting of journalists held in Antananarivo in August 2009. However, in light of their past experiences, journalists are skeptical that the initiative will result in any progress.

Many journalist training institutions have been established, with the most important being the University of Antananarivo and Catholic University. The number of formally educated journalists is inadequate, however; often, graduates from these institutions head for careers in communication, development enterprises, or work for international organizations, rather than journalism.

Aside from the coursework provided by universities, very few training options are available. Occasionally, international organizations such as UNDP, the American Cultural Center, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, or the Embassy of Germany offer training for journalists. But according to Razafimahatratra, these classes are rare, and few journalists can really benefit from them.

A large majority of journalists simply receive on-the-job training, Rajaonarison said. Each media outlet attempts to train its own staff, or find partnerships to do so. Soavinarivo gave the example of the training support that Switzerland Radio provides to Radio Fahazavana staff. The panelists identified a need for more training programs to help journalists develop niche reporting specialties, such as economics and law.

Many newspapers, such as *Midi Madagasikara* and *Tribune*, have their own printing houses. Others, including *La Vérité* or *Malaza*, rely upon the services of other private printing houses. The government no longer owns a printing house for the public media to make use of. Distribution outside major cities varies; generally, newspapers reach remote areas via

rural buses on the same day or the day after, based on the distance and trip frequency. Air travel, via Air Madagascar, is no longer an affordable option for press organizations.

List of Panel Participants

Tiburce Soavinarivo, journalist, Radio Fahazavana, Antananarivo

Rahaga Ramaholimihaso, president and CEO, Societe Malgache d'Édition, Antananarivo

Stephenson Ravoajanahary, journalist, TV Manakara, Manakara

Sidonie Rahaingomalala, journalist, Madagascar Télévision, Antananarivo

Faly Rajaonarison, journalist, *Les Nouvelles*, Antananarivo

Nanou Fiankinana, journalist and communication coordinator, UNDP, Antananarivo

Jean Paul Razafimahatratra, journalist, Radio Madagasikara, Antananarivo

Jean Eric Rakotoarisoa, editorial director, *Dan les Médias de Demain*, Antananarivo

James Ratsimandresy, consultant and former journalist, Radio Nationale Malagasy, Antananarivo

Ruphin Rakotomaharo, chair, Madagascar Journalist Association, Antananarivo

Jemima Rakotoasimbola, journalist, M3TV, Mahajanga

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The Madagascar study was coordinated by, and conducted in partnership with, Multi-Service Information Systems, Antananarivo.