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TOGO

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Since the beginning of Togo's bumpy attempts to transition to democracy in the 1990s, its media sector has experienced a boom. Today, 98 radio stations and 12 television channels pepper the tiny West African country, and it has more than 40 publications, including three daily newspapers (one governmental and two private).

However, the abundance has not been matched in quality. With just a few exceptions, journalists have become mouthpieces of political parties. Insufficient training, minimal adherence to professional standards, and disregard for ethical rules are partly to blame. Low salaries, outmoded equipment, and poor working conditions further render media professionals vulnerable to all types of pressures, especially political and financial.

Togo has a legal framework in place to protect the interests of journalists, and the media does enjoy some freedom of expression. The government does not restrict access to news, and has not criminalized press offenses since 2004. However, the government does create obstacles for the private media, and enforcement of pro-media legislation remains a key challenge. Attacks on journalists, while rare, are seldom investigated, beyond half-hearted attempts. The governmental body created to uphold the freedom of the press, the Higher Communications and Broadcasting Authority (known by its French acronym, HAAC), censors the independent media, suspending publications that challenge the government.

This year's MSI study showed clearly that in Togo, despite legislation protecting the freedom of speech, the government's lack of appropriate enforcement remains a great obstacle to the press. Another weakness of the Togolese media is that many journalists fail to observe ethics standards. Although the overall scores did not change significantly in the period under review, the score for Objective 1 (legal and social protections for freedom of speech) did dip rather dramatically, dragging the score into the unsustainable, mixed-system range. Scores increased for Objective 3 (plurality of news), and combined with steady or slightly higher ratings for the other objectives, the scores evened out—resulting in a total very close to last year's score.

# TOGO AT A GLANCE

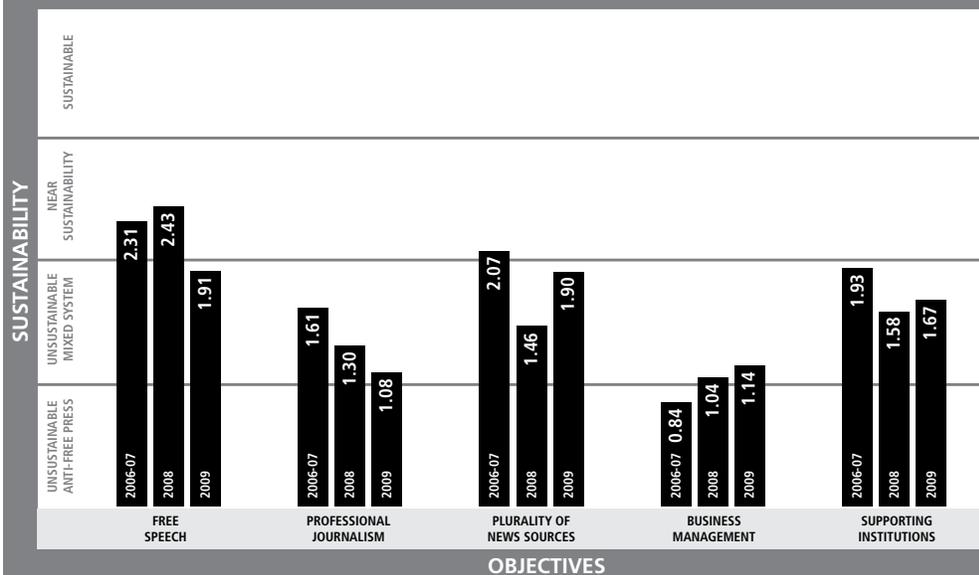
## GENERAL

- > **Population:** 6,587,239 (est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Lomé
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** African (37 tribes; largest and most important are Ewe, Mina, and Kabre) 99%, European and Syrian-Lebanese less than 1% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Christian 29%, Muslim 20%, indigenous beliefs 51% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages:** French (official and the language of commerce), Ewe and Mina (the two major African languages in the south), Kabye (sometimes spelled Kabiye) and Dagomba (the two major African languages in the north) (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2009-Atlas):** \$2.883 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2010)
- > **GNI per capita (2009-PPP):** \$850 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2010)
- > **Literacy rate:** 60.9% (male 75.4%, female 46.9%) (2003 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** President Faure Gnassingbe (since May 4, 2005)

## MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** Print: 400 regularly registered publications, out of which 45 are currently operational; Radio Stations: 98 registered radio stations, 96 operational countrywide; Television Stations: 8 registered television stations, 6 fully operational, 2 on test transmission
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** N/A
- > **Broadcast ratings:** N/A
- > **News agencies:** The Togo News Agency (state-owned) ACP-Inter and Savoir-news (private)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** N/A
- > **Internet usage:** 350,000 (2008 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

### MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: TOGO



#### 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

### Togo Objective Score: 1.91

The score for Objective 1 slipped more than a half a point from last year. According to the panelists, the Objective 1 score is an indication that the country does meet the basic tenets of freedom of speech, but its evolution is still dependent on public authorities. Driving this loss were poorer scores for indicators 1 (legal protections), 2, (media licensing), 3 (market entry), 4 (attacks on journalists), 5 (legal protections for public media's editorial independence), and 9 (entry into the profession). A modest improvement in indicator 6 (libel) was not nearly enough to balance these losses. Most indicators scored close to the objective score, with some exceptions. Indicators 8 (the media's access to news) and 9 scored three-quarters of a point and a point higher than the objective score, respectively. Indicators 4 and 5, on the other hand, scored below the objective score, also by three-quarters of a point and a point, respectively.

The panelists emphasized that legislation exists that regulates and protects the freedom of speech. In 2004, Togo adopted a decriminalized press code and an organic law implementing HAAC as a regulating agency, and panelists pointed out that the decriminalization of press offenses should lead to an increase in journalists' professionalism and sense of responsibility.

#### 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.

*"Investigating and punishing attackers of journalists remains an unsolved problem, given that as a general rule, opened investigations are never completed," said Kossi Dodzi Adigbo, an attorney with the Lomé Bar Association.*

Despite these protections, the press is not immune from hardships. HAAC is tasked with protecting the freedom of the press but censors the media instead, according to the panelists. "Often the HAAC itself obstructs the law by banning multiple newspapers and shows under false pretexts," said Valentin Komla Nyatika, a journalist and chair of the Togolese League of Voters. For example, as of now, editorials are banned from being broadcast on Nana FM radio station. Also, HAAC suspended the publications *Forum de la Semaine* and *Combat du Peuple* for 15 days and one month, respectively, even though HAAC failed to file a request with the prosecutor's office, as stipulated by law.

The panelists said that the authorities do not always grant broadcast licenses according to regulations. According to the law, the license process should be fair and competitive—but in reality, it is still subject to political manipulation. There is a real dysfunction, bordering on duality, between the two institutes involved in licensing: the HAAC, which grants licenses; and the Public Telecommunications Regulating Authority, which grants frequencies. When the latter announced that it would deny frequencies in the media-saturated capital of Lomé, City FM and LCF television channel—both owned by a member of the government—still managed to secure broadcasting frequencies. According to Ebénézer Latévi Lawson, a journalist and head of a communications training school in Lomé, "The fact that broadcasting licenses are somewhat restricted compromises the fair competition of licenses." Furthermore, the panelists noted that politics drives the hiring for the license-granting and media-regulating institutions and agencies, and the authorities appoint the chiefs of these bodies.

Like any enterprise based in Togo, the private press is subject to ordinary taxation—in general, the government does not grant preferential treatment to the media (such as tax relief for new companies, paper, or other equipment). The broadcast media pay annual fees for using frequencies, but the government imposes no special fees on print media.

Attacks and crimes against journalists and photographers are increasingly rare. In the few cases that occur, the perpetrators are never identified or punished. Normally, the authorities

announce the opening up of investigations to find and punish the attackers, but never seem to follow through with the investigations, panelists said. They gave several examples, including the manager of *Forum de la Semaine*, Jean-Baptiste Djilan (also known as Dimas Dikodo), who was fatally wounded three years ago. The case has never seen justice, even though authorities initiated an investigation. More recently, Gilles Gbagba, a journalist with the Metropolis radio station in Lomé, was beaten in the street by military personnel on July 15, 2009. The Ministry of Safety and Civil Protection announced an investigation, which has revealed nothing to date. On July 23, 2009, Journalists for Human Rights organized a protest march in response, but police officers blocked the demonstration.

The media community—and the wider Togolese public—continue to believe that journalists are not safe from violence of any kind. “Investigating and punishing attackers of journalists remains an unsolved problem, given that as a general rule, opened investigations are never completed,” said Kossi Dodzi Adigbo, an attorney with the Lomé Bar Association. “This leads us to believe that the authors of such heinous acts enjoy a certain amount of impunity, which can only encourage new aggressive outbreaks, pressures, and threats against journalists.”

The state-owned/public media are almost exclusively in the service of the authorities. It is widely known that state media are not truly independent and they distort the news to please the government. The panelists debated extensively the widespread impression that state-owned media are packed with the most seasoned journalists—yet they practice self-censorship and devote themselves to singing the praises of the authorities. “It is regrettable to see just how much humiliation the state-owned media can endure,” said Kodjo Ayi Mamavi, a producer with the national television channel. “Granted, they generally have the best-trained journalists, but they are not always allowed to fully and freely express themselves.” In fact, politicians appoint the managers of these media (Radio Lomé, Radio Kara, Télévision Togolaise, and Agence Togolaise de Presse).

Libel is a criminal offense in Togo, punishable under the criminal code, article 58. However, amendments to the criminal code in 2004 struck down prison sentences for libel as part of a deal with the European Union to end sanctions. Today, the press and communication code punishes libel by leveling fines from XOF 100,000 to XOF 5 million. According to Toyitom Amelete, a journalism instructor with the Ministry of Communication and Culture, “The court seems to be the only solution. But given the state of our legal system, justice is never certain to prevail.”

Today, however, journalists are rarely prosecuted or sentenced for libel. When cases occur, conflicts are usually mediated and settled by the Observatoire Togolais des Médias (OTM), a self-regulating agency, and HAAC.

In discussing access to public information, the panelists were unanimous that journalists face great obstacles in accessing public information. F. Akpédjé Kouassi, head of programming of La Légende radio station in Lomé, pointed out, “In terms of accessing public information, the state-owned media are obviously favored over the private media.” However, most of the panelists said that they believe that journalists do not work hard enough to gather and cross-check information—which, in turn, makes public authorities more likely to distrust the private media and withhold public information.

Togolese media have access to multiple news sources. Major sources include RFI, BBC, Africa 1, AFP, Panapresse, Reuters, the Internet, and cellular and fixed telephony. The Internet is still too expensive and is unavailable within the entire national territory.

The government places no restrictions on becoming a journalist. However, HAAC requires journalists to hold HAAC-issued press cards. Togo has no real school of journalism—only communication training centers open to anyone. The government does not control the centers. Neither government nor political interests influence journalist-recruiting policies in the private sector. Moreover, journalists are free to organize themselves to protect their rights.

## OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

### Togo Objective Score: 1.08

Again this year, Objective 2 received the lowest score—and the score even dipped nearly a quarter of a point from last year’s study. Much of this loss of score came from lower scores in indicators 1 (objective and well-sourced reporting), 2 (journalism ethics), and 7 (modern facilities and equipment). All indicator scores fell within a half-point of the objective score.

The panelists noted that the low professional level of the Togolese press, and its general disregard for ethical rules, is apparent in the poor quality of programs and content. Panelists gave indicators 2 and indicator 5 (pay levels) their lowest scores, and noted their beliefs that the two indicators are linked—low salaries make Togolese journalists more vulnerable to corruption and manipulation. Furthermore, the lack of training and awareness of ethical rules, journalists’ precarious living conditions, and the lack of suitable

equipment all contribute to the pervasive professional deficiencies that plague Togolese media.

Most reports show a disregard for professional practices. Often reporting is biased, and frequently Togolese media are blamed for spreading false news and unfounded rumors. Amelete said, "Reports are not well documented, and journalists focus on sensational issues that sell papers, rather than important topics." Nyatika added, "Reporting painfully lacks professionalism, as well as a sense of fairness and objectivity. There is no documentation to speak of. Self-censorship is a constant reality."

Back in 1999, OTM drew up a code of ethics, which almost all public-sector and private-sector journalists signed. The code details the ethical standards that journalists must meet when performing their jobs, and reflects international press ethics standards. Disappointingly, though, journalists often violate the code's provisions. OTM and HAAC respond in cases of multiple violations of ethical rules.

Event organizers often complain about reporters who harass them by asking to be paid or offered gifts (known as "final releases" in Togolese media jargon) in exchange for favorable media coverage. Mathilde Sant-Anna, head of communications with Women in Law and Development in Africa, pointed out, "Media managers only go to work if transportation and accommodations are covered. They will not hesitate to abandon an activity for a more profitable one."

Often, Togolese journalists fail to address many major events and key issues, and especially avoid national security and defense topics, corruption, and any news concerning public affairs management.

#### 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).

*Nyatika added, "Reporting painfully lacks professionalism, as well as a sense of fairness and objectivity. There is no documentation to speak of. Self-censorship is a constant reality."*

Across the sector, salaries are extremely low—when they are paid at all. According to the panelists, such poor wages leave journalists vulnerable to corruption and pressure. Generally, Togolese journalists rank among the lowest-paid citizens. Salaries are particularly poor in the private sector; most journalists collect only a sort of gratuity for their articles and productions. While journalists working for the state-owned media are paid based on a public servant salary scale, their living conditions indicate that apparently they fare little better than their private sector counterparts.

Togolese media continue to have trouble balancing news and entertainment. The panelists were unanimous that entertainment prevails over news and reporting, while real news is presented only minimally. Most outlets have no specialized programs, with the possible exception of some shows on health, education, and the economy that often lack consistency, objectivity, and fairness. Nyatika noted, "Religious shows and entertainment on television and the radio take up almost 80 percent of the airtime. Pastors and sect leaders are frequently solicited because they pay for their own airtime, thus helping the management to cover operational charges."

In the age of booming new information and communication technologies, Togolese media still grapple with rudimentary technical installations and equipment. The broadcast media in particular sorely lack proper newsgathering and processing equipment such as cameras, microphones, tape recorders, and computers. At Radio Lomé, for example, journalists have no digital recording devices and still carry clunky old Nagra tape recorders when they are out reporting. As for the written press, they have no real modern printing houses. Old offset machines still are used to print papers.

#### OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

**Togo Objective Score: 1.90**

Nearly all indicators showed improvement to help Objective 3 increase by nearly half a point compared to last year. Only indicator 3 (state media are nonpartisan) did not improve; in fact it fell to a score even lower than last year, more than

*Private broadcast media produce few news programs of their own. Nyatika noted, "Television channels lack the resources to produce original content."*

three-quarters of a point behind the objective score. All other indicators scored within a half-point of the objective score except for indicator 2 (citizen access to media).

News sources are relatively numerous and diverse, according to the panelists. At least one radio station can be found in every town, and the country has a small community radio station presence: just three rural stations, funded by the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie. Despite Togo's small size, the Lomé and Kara radio stations and National Television do not cover the entire national territory.

As indicated in last year's MSI, the government does not restrict access to national or international media. However, residents in more rural areas that lack basic infrastructure, such as electricity and telephones, do not enjoy the same access to broadcast media, and have no access to the Internet. Where the Internet is available, frequently it is too expensive for many residents. Kodjo Agbotse Mawuli, general manager of the African Cultural Entrepreneurs Network, noted, "The lack of financial resources is a crucial impediment in accessing news sources, but other than that, there are no legal restrictions."

#### 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.

As for the print media, most outlets are clustered in the capital of Lomé, and only a few cities in the rest of the territory receive copies of print media. Although the national daily *Togo Presse* distributes in all cities, it does not reach every part of the country.

Indicator 3, concerning the public service nature of the state-owned media, obtained the lowest score for this objective—indicating that Togo's state media fail to satisfy the minimum conditions of reflecting the entire spectrum of political opinions. According to the panelists, the public media's approach to covering the government and opposition activities is very unbalanced. The public or state-owned media often fail to show alternative viewpoints, dedicating the bulk of newscasts to the government. Furthermore, public media outlets feature few cultural or educational programs.

Since 2008, two national independent press agencies (ACP-Inter and Savoir-news) have served Togo press outlets. They supplement the news issued from the state-owned Agence Togolaise de Presse. Additionally, all Togolese media use the productions of international independent agencies such as AP, AFP, Panapress, and Reuters—and sometimes, the panelists noted, they do so without paying or properly crediting the source.

Private broadcast media produce few news programs of their own. Nyatika noted, "Television channels lack the resources to produce original content." Instead, broadcast outlets frequently rebroadcast programs of foreign channels such as TV5-Monde, France 24, Africa 24, RFI, Deutsche-Welle, VOA, BBC, and others.

Except for a few rare cases, the real media owners in Togo are not well-known. However, Kouassi noted, "We do not officially know who is behind the media, but it is not a big secret; those who want to know more can find out." Other panelists pointed out that the lack of transparency in media ownership helps feed public suspicion that the media are political tools. On the question of foreign investment, the panelists noted that Togo's press laws specify that at least 51 percent of the capital of a media enterprise must be in domestic hands.

The Togolese media do address social issues, albeit with limited diversity. Togo's population of an estimated six million is made up of several ethnic groups, and the dominant ethnic groups are the Ewe, Kabye, Kotokoli, and Moba. Apart from French, Togo's official language, Ewe and Kabye are the two national languages taught in schools. The amount of broadcast media programming in national languages is acceptable. The private newspapers do not appear in the national languages; only the government-run daily, *Togo Presse*, has news pages in Ewe and Kabye.

In general, the news appearing in the media does not meet citizens' expectations in terms of coverage of minorities. Moreover, the panelists pointed out that almost all the community radio stations, which would normally be managed and run by their community members, operate just like commercial stations and do not suitably meet the needs of local populations.

#### OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

### Togo Objective Score: 1.14

Togo has practically no media enterprise; most of the media operate informally. This is reflected in the low score for this objective. Indicator 6 (market research) and indicator 7 (broadcast ratings and print circulation) again lagged behind the objective score by more than half a point despite showing notable improvement compared with last year. Indicator 2 (multiple sources of revenue) also showed improvement. Indicator 5 (government subsidies for private media) lost ground, but still scored more than a point higher than the objective score.

The panelists emphasized that newspapers and radio stations are not true press enterprises with suitable management to ensure their independence; in fact, they said, almost all media owners do not have the slightest knowledge about business management. They operate without a business plan, and managers do not disclose their funding sources or spending. Several panelists commented on the problems related to shortcomings in business management. Lawson said, "Under these circumstances, the financial and political powers have an enormous influence over journalists." For Amelete, "In

#### 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.

*According to Jean Agbati, director of the Citadelle community radio station, "The lack of responsible marketing and management does not help to raise suitable resources. As a result, the media are adrift in a state of precariousness, which makes them vulnerable to manipulation."*

Togo, the media often identify with their founders. They are not real enterprises. If the owners get in trouble, the media have problems." According to Jean Agbati, director of the Citadelle community radio station, "The lack of responsible marketing and management does not help to raise suitable resources. As a result, the media are adrift in a state of precariousness, which makes them vulnerable to manipulation."

The funding sources of the independent media are uncertain. It is public knowledge that with little or no advertising, the press cannot survive on sales of copies, especially when sales are poor or insignificant. For example, most newspapers print 500 to 2000 copies per issue, but 50 percent of copies do not sell. This is why their very survival seems shady to the public eye, according to the panelists. Victor Toulassi pointed out, "Sometimes the media feel obligated to exchange overzealously favorable coverage for gifts and funding," as a matter of survival.

The panelists described Togo's advertising agencies as mediocre production studios or advertisement and commercial distribution boxes. The advertising market is not organized, which is a real loss for the media. Most of the time, state-owned companies distribute advertising to politically friendly outlets, with no respect for the rules of competition. Since the advertising market is slim, the best that most media outlets can hope for are charitable gestures here and there, panelists said. The panelists also faulted the poor management of many outlets, noting that they almost never compose strategic plans to enhance their revenue or attract more advertising.

The law provides for state subsidies to the private press, but subsidies still are not available consistently. Many media professionals have been requesting subsidies for a long time, arguing that several press and communication code provisions set forth terms for such support. However, others fear that the gesture is tantamount to buying off journalists with public money. In 2009, the government decided to grant the

*The panelists said that the domestic human rights NGOs, which defend the freedom and independence of the media, are not dynamic enough. On the other hand, they are happy to report that they have attorneys taking individual initiatives to help journalists facing the courts.*

independent private media financial aid in the amount of XOF 350 million (\$640,000), although, at the time of the MSI panel, it had not been spent entirely. Previous subsidies were far smaller: XOF 50 million (\$90,000) to the private press in 2006; XOF 37 million (\$68,000) in 2007; and; XOF 75 million (\$138,000) in 2008. In the past, the government granted funds to the press in an informal, unregulated manner.

The panelists noted also that even the state-run media cannot depend upon receiving the full amount of payment that they are allocated, although the law mandates subsidies for state media.

The media do not conduct market research; according to the panelists, Togolese press outlets have never estimated effectively how much information the public consumes. At this time, no agency or market research is available to measure ratings or print runs; reliable statistics on the Togolese press are hard to find. The panelists lamented that the media fail to develop strategies destined to guarantee their financial independence.

## OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

### Togo Objective Score: 1.67

The score for Objective 5 remained more or less unchanged compared with last year, although some movement in indicator scores occurred. Indicators 1 (trade associations) and 4 (academic journalism programs) improved while indicators 6 (access to printing) and 7 (apolitical channels of distribution) both received worse scores. Most indicators scored within a half-point of the objective score, with two exceptions. Indicator 3 (NGOs support free speech and independent media) scored almost a point higher than the objective score, demonstrating that NGOs do attempt to defend the rights of journalists. However, despite its improvement, indicator 1 still lagged behind the objective score by about two-thirds of a point.

Trade associations that represent the interests of private media owners are an especially weak area. Business ventures are not very supportive of the media, and do not perform a lobbying role on the media's behalf. In the eyes of the public—and even journalists—media owners and managers lack credibility, rendering them unsuitable to be involved in the protection of the media. Togo has many supporting associations, but their lobbying is not strong enough to help the press develop normally.

Almost two years ago, the existing press owners' associations merged to create a new body, called the National Council of Patrons of the Press. So far, however, this board has not demonstrated progress in upholding the professional interests of the media.

Professional associations, including the Independent Journalists Union of Togo; the Free Union of Communication; and the Union of Information Agents, Technicians, and Journalists from the Public Media, have demonstrated more commitment to protecting and defending journalists' rights. Some of these associations also offer training seminars and workshops to their members. Neither the government nor any of these associations have implemented a journalist training policy.

The panelists said that the domestic human rights NGOs, which defend the freedom and independence of the media, are not dynamic enough. On the other hand, they are happy to report that they have attorneys taking individual initiatives to help journalists facing the courts.

Togo still lacks a journalism school; it has only centers and institutions offering business communication programs as part of a communication training curriculum. All of the true professional degree-holding journalists have retired, and all

## 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.

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worked for the state-run media. Nyatika commented that all journalists working in the private media today received only on-the-job training. As noted in last year's MSI, many poorly trained journalists resist the idea of obtaining professional training to upgrade their skills.

Private newspapers do not own their own printing presses; instead, newspapers are published typically in privately owned printing houses. Print media have no distribution network to speak of. Togo does not have news kiosks. Instead, newspapers are sold in the open air, or, very rarely, in bookstores and grocery stores—or by itinerant salespeople.

## List of Panel Participants

**Ebénézer Latévi Lawson**, director, Center for Practical Training in Communications, Lomé

**Victor K. Toulassi**, journalist; communication consultant; member, Group for Reflective Action for Democracy and Development, Lomé

**Kodjo Agbotse Mawuli**, general manager, African Cultural Entrepreneurs Network, Lomé

**Kossi Dodzi Adigbo**, attorney, Lomé

**Donko Balogou**, journalist and director, School of Technology and Communication Arts, Lomé

**F. Akpédjé Kouassi**, programming manager, Radio la Legende, Lomé

**Etsri H Clumson-Eklu**, president, Togolese Association of Human Rights, Lomé

**Kodjo Ayi Mamavi**, journalist and producer, National Television, Lomé

**Jean M. Agbati**, director of Radio Citadelle, Vogan

**Mathilde R. Sant-Anna**, head of communication, Discussion and Action Group for Women, Democracy, and Development (GF2D), Lomé

**Amelete Toyitom**, journalism instructor, Ministry of Communication and Culture, Lomé

**Valentin Komla Nyatika**, journalist and chair of the Togolese League of Voters, Lomé

## Moderator and Author

**Francis Pedro Amuzun Assiongbon**, publication manager, *Journal Crocodile*; secretary-general of the Togolese League of Electors, Lomé

## Observer

**Franck Ayaw Assah**, correspondent, *Panapresse* and Media Foundation for West Africa, Lomé

## Reporter

**Ahlin Papou Kponton**, journalist, webmaster, Lomé

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