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ZAMBIA

With a score virtually unchanged from the 2008 MSI, apparently Zambia has been unable to regain the ground lost from the more optimistic 2006-2007 MSI, which portrayed the country's media sector as approaching sustainability.

The hard-fought 2008 election of Rupiah Bwezani Banda, of the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD), marked the shift toward a difficult time for journalists, who suffered from intimidation and attacks throughout the election season. Since then, the new ruling elite have demonstrated a lack of tolerance for public criticism. A Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Zambia alert said that on February 26, 2009, President Banda verbally attacked *The Post*, a leading privately-owned tabloid, accusing the newspaper of publishing provocative stories against him. According to the alert, the president informed MMD members at the State House, "*The Post* has attacked me from the time you chose me as your presidential candidate until you elected me as president. I have refused to close them down. They will close down because of their debt."

On other fronts, the Zambian media landscape has remained remarkably unchanged, with little or no progress made to advance long-promised reforms. The 2008 MSI noted particular concern over the government's failure to put in place a board of directors for the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC), in line with the ZNBC Amendment Act of 2002. The government still has not implemented the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) Act of 2002 because parliament has not appointed or ratified IBA board members, despite the late president Levy Patrick Mwanawasa's promises during his official opening of parliament on January 11, 2008. Mwanawasa's promise to reintroduce a freedom of information bill to the parliament has also not been honored.

In addition to pointing out much-needed legal reforms, the MSI panel for 2009 highlighted ongoing problems in terms of professionalism and improving the business management aspect of media health. The media community agrees widely that self-regulation is paramount in setting and upholding standards of professionalism and ethics, but the Media Council of Zambia (MECOZ), the body established to implement and manage the self-regulatory model, is undermined by the media community's lack of respect and material support. In turn, MECOZ's failure to progress has invited the government to flirt with attempts to exercise more control over standards, along with its activities compromising editorial independence.

These are some of the issues preventing Zambia from reclaiming its previous strides toward a more sustainable media climate. The overall country score remained essentially the same (last year's score was a 1.89), and the rank ordering of the objectives did not change. Objectives 5 (supporting institutions) and 3 (plurality of news sources) remain the highest-scoring, narrowly reaching the near-sustainability category, while the remaining three objectives are categorized as unsustainable mixed systems. Business management (Objective 4) improved noticeably but still scored lowest, while professional journalism (Objective 2) and freedom of speech (Objective 1) remained about the same.

# ZAMBIA AT A GLANCE

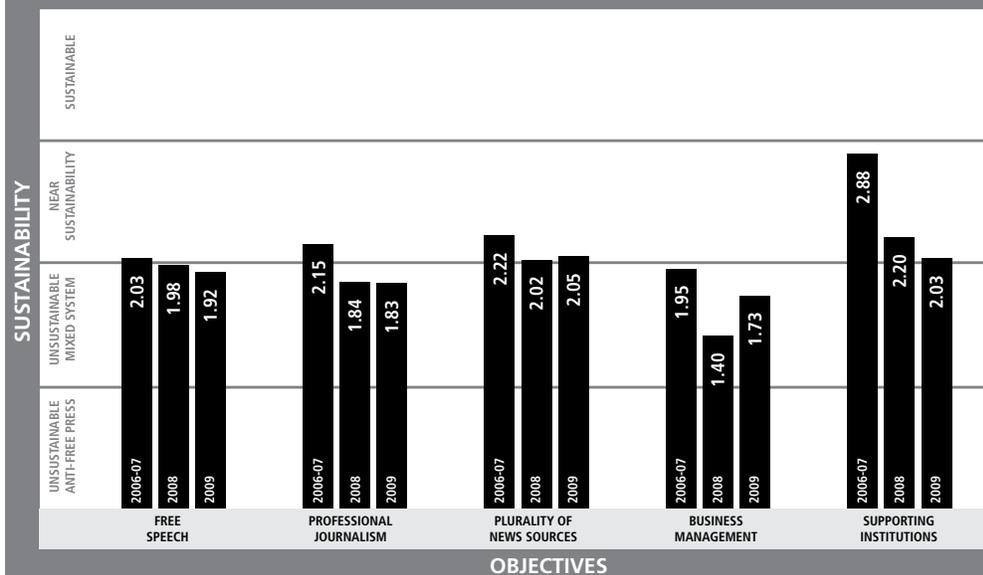
## GENERAL

- > **Population:** 11,862,740 (July 2010 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Lusaka
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** African 99.5% (includes Bemba, Tonga, Chewa, Lozi, Nsenga, Tumbuka, Ngoni, Lala, Kaonde, Lunda, and other African groups), other 0.5% (includes Europeans, Asians, and Americans) (2000 Census)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Christian 50%-75%, Muslim and Hindu 24%-49%, indigenous beliefs 1% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages (% of population):** Bemba 30.1% (official), Nyanja 10.7% (official), Tonga 10.6% (official), Lozi 5.7% (official), Chewa 4.9%, Nsenga 3.4%, Tumbuka 2.5%, Lunda 2.2% (official), Kaonde 2% (official), Lala 2%, Luvale 1.7% (official), English 1.7% (official), other 22.5% (2000 Census)
- > **GNI (2009-Atlas):** \$12.56 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2010)
- > **GNI per capita (2009-PPP):** \$1,280 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2010)
- > **Literacy rate:** 80.6% (male 86.8%, female 74.8%) (2003 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** President Rupiah Banda (since August 19, 2008)

## MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:**  
Print: 14 newspapers; Radio Stations: 18; Television Stations: 3
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** Top three by circulation: *The Post* (circulation 27,500, privately-owned), *Zambia Daily Mail* (circulation 10,000, state-owned), *Times of Zambia* (circulation 14,000, state-owned)
- > **Broadcast ratings:** Top radio station: Radio Phoenix FM
- > **News agencies:** Zambia News and Information Service (state-owned), Palesa (private)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** N/A
- > **Internet usage:** 700,000 (2008 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: ZAMBIA



### 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

### Zambia Objective Score: 1.92

The most dramatic drops were seen in indicators 3 (market entry and taxation) and 4 (crimes against journalists). Indicators 8 (access to international news and information) and 9 (entry into the journalism profession) achieved the highest scores, about three-quarters of a point higher than the overall objective score. Indicator 7 (freedom of information) scored about three-quarters of a point behind. The remaining indicators scored within a half-point of the overall score.

Regarding the legal and social protections of free speech, panelists noted that Zambia's constitution guarantees freedom of speech, expression, and assembly, and that Article 20(2) of the constitution provides that no law shall be passed which derogates the freedom of the press. *The Post* news editor, Chansa Kabwela, said that, "Over the years, Zambia has continued to enjoy relative freedom of the press. People are able to express themselves through the various platforms available, but there is still room for reforms to guarantee more freedom." She added, however, that media freedom has its limits. "The opposition political parties, for instance, do not enjoy favorable coverage in the state media," she said. Masautso Phiri, a media consultant, observed, "Constitutional provisions can't reverse the trends. Privately owned media oppose government, while the state-owned media is pro-government."

#### 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.

*Another media consultant, Edem Djokotoe, observed that the government is now showing more pervasive signs of intolerance, with "the Republican president verbally attacking [The Post]... while his minions declare publicly that they will sort out The Post if it continues to insult their president.*

MISA Zambia chairperson Henry Kabwe said that "apart from provisions in the constitution, which are themselves null and void in practice, laws on defamation, sedition, and obscenity impede freedom of speech and access to information. There is no law obliging information holders in public offices to divulge [information], no matter how important the information is to the safety and development of concerned people." Kabwela echoed these sentiments, adding, "There are so many laws that hinder the work of journalists... such as the [official] Secrets Act, criminal libel, and the law on defamation."

Another media consultant, Edem Djokotoe, observed that the government is now showing more pervasive signs of intolerance, with "the Republican president verbally attacking [*The Post*]...while his minions declare publicly that they will sort out *The Post* if it continues to insult their president. Threats of treason have also been bandied about, and that doesn't create an environment conducive for the promotion of free speech and access to public information—especially considering the ruling party's garrison mentality."

Djokotoe argued that social protection of free speech does not exist in the country. However, Hot FM news editor, Changwe Kabwe, had a slightly different opinion. "The Zambian constitution does guarantee freedom of speech. That freedom is valued by members of society...however, the same freedom is sometimes abused by both journalists and ordinary citizens." Caristo Chitamfya said that while he was head of productions and operations at ZNBC, he felt that free speech is limited. "Private media are still viewed as an opposition party by the government," he said. Media freedom violations do provoke public outcry, he claimed, but public objections are usually only covered by the independent media. Media lawyer Patrick Matibini observed, "There are prospects that the landscape of freedom of expression and the press will improve after the review of the current constitution is concluded."

Further evidence of state interference in press coverage surfaced when *The Post* was criticized for the limited

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distribution of photographs taken of a woman giving birth unaided while health personnel were on strike. Kabwela said that she was accused of circulating obscene material when she sent copies of the photographs to government ministers and NGOs, in an attempt to focus attention on hospital conditions.

*Mining Mirror* managing editor Patricia Mwase commented that the government is not the only institution that interferes with free speech. She pins some of the blame on the advertising sector as well, citing the influence of large companies that sponsor news bulletins and flex their financial muscle to ensure that media broadcast nothing negative about them. Mwase also noted that church-owned radio stations are limited in what they can say. "It's very difficult to speak out against the church, and easier to point at government," she said.

Regarding the fairness of the broadcast licensing system, panelists said that the ZNBC Amendment Act of 2002 transferred the licensing function from ZNBC to the IBA, but the government has yet to implement the act fully. The ministry suspended issuance of new broadcast licenses on February 27, 2009, announcing that it is working towards establishing IBA's capacity to take over the licensing function. At present, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services still manages the licensing process. "The net effect of all this is that we have an illegal body performing [the functions of the board]," Matibini said. Radio Mazabuka station manager Albert Mwiinga agreed. "The minister of information and broadcasting can [refuse to] issue a broadcast license at his discretion," he said. "The licensing agency is not free and independent; rather, it is under the influence of the government of the day."

Mwiinga said that financial roadblocks hamper the fair allocation of licenses as well. "The ministry currently requires that those wishing to open radio stations have, as minimum capital, an [initial] ZMK 60 million [\$12,800]. This is a hardship, and too high for those intending to open up community radio stations," he said. In addition, stations have to pay the communications authority for the frequency, and the government for a license. "[This] makes it difficult to encourage the growth of more community radio stations," he added.

As for the indicator covering the fairness of market entry and tax structure for media, panelists said that the media pays the same taxes as other industries. These taxes raise the prices of broadcast equipment and newsprint, and serve effectively as barriers to entry. Many panelists said that they believe that media houses should be given tax incentives, because of the important role of the media in society. Mwase commented, "What is needed is for the media to lobby, like farmers, for fewer taxes." Changwe Kabwe suggested that "the taxes imposed on such businesses should be relaxed further, in order to help especially the emerging private media." Radio Lyambayi station manager Mukeya Liwena agreed, saying that media plays a special role in national development. He leveled criticism at a district council's \$400 annual fee to use the district's airwaves. "In other countries, councils help to construct community radio stations," he said. There are signals of possible changes ahead, though; according to an undated MISA Zambia communiqué, the Minister of Information indicated a willingness to consider lowering taxes on newsprint. Liwena said that cheaper newspapers could help promote literacy and combat Zambia's falling literacy levels.

In general, crimes against journalists and media outlets are on the increase, according to the panelists—but no perpetrators were prosecuted in the past year. Kabwe gave an overview of the situation. "Journalists, especially from the private media, are sometimes harassed by cadres from political parties, especially the ruling party. They are beaten, their equipment is destroyed, and they are prevented from covering certain functions. The journalists from the government media likewise are harassed by the opposition political parties, and are sometimes referred to as spies. The crimes against journalists in Zambia, including physical and verbal abuse, are increasing, and both the public and private media journalists are targeted."

MISA Zambia regularly publicizes acts of violence against media members. A May 11, 2009 MISA Zambia alert reported that alleged MDD operatives beat a newspaper vendor from *The Post* in the North Western province's capital, Solwezi. The vendor, Deaven Mwanamwale, was cornered by attackers who first pretended to buy newspapers from him—then pounced on him, kicked him, and robbed him of some of the papers. MISA Zambia also reported that on May 25, 2009, cadres of the ruling MMD roughed up a Radio Phoenix reporter after mistaking her for a reporter from *The Post*. Phiri added that recently, journalists from *The Post* and Muvi TV "have been harassed and beaten, and no one has been prosecuted [for these crimes]."

According to another MISA Zambia alert, "On February 6, 2009, 11 plainclothes police officers beat up and

pepper-sprayed *The Post* photojournalist Abel Mambwe and detained him, together with reporter Mutuna Chanda, after he photographed them assaulting a pirate taxi driver. "Mambwe was pepper-sprayed in the left eye, lifted by the trousers, handcuffed on the left arm and bundled into a plainclothes police minibus when he [refused] to hand over his camera. When Chanda tried to rescue the camera from the police officers, they kicked and punched him until he fell to the floor," the alert stated. On February 9, 2009, MISA Zambia reported on the demotion of 11 officers, and their transfer to various police stations within the Copperbelt province. Notably, Acting Inspector General of Police Francis Kabonde expressed disappointment that the two journalists declined to institute legal proceedings against officers.

In considering whether or not public officials receive preferential legal treatment, the panel agreed that they do to an extent, and in practice, the public media are subject to editorial constraints. Changwe Kabwe commented, "It is common knowledge that editorial independence in the public media is not guaranteed. We have instances where the strong arm of government exerts control over public media content." Kabwe continued to note that political appointments in the public media greatly influence the editorial stance that appointees take on certain issues. Henry Kabwe said this was evident in the public media's coverage of a health sector strike. While the private media covered both sides, the public media only featured government statements. Journalism lecturer Mutemwa Makomani cited an incident in which journalists from *The Post* were barred from attending a presidential press conference, which he said speaks "volumes about the political environment in which reporters have been subjected to work."

In considering how Zambia treats libel cases, panelists noted that Zambia performed poorly on this indicator primarily because it has not been tested recently. Several panelists singled out Zambia's libel laws as an area of weakness. Last year's MSI reported that libel could be treated as either a civil or criminal case, and public officials are not held to a higher standard for having to prove falsity or malice.

Most of the panelists agreed that the right of access to public information for all journalists is not secure, and that the absence of a freedom of information law continues to affect access to public records. Kabwela underlined the media's efforts to fight for this bill and other reforms, saying, "Promises to enact an access to information law have hit a snag once too often, and the present promises haven't been reassuring." He said that some political leaders have issued public statements suggesting that these changes are on the way, but other panelists were skeptical.

Zambia scored fairly high on the indicator assessing access to international news and news sources; the government does not restrict those sources or regulate the Internet. However, panelists noted with regret that both the private and public media rely too heavily on the same news sources for information.

Journalists working in Zambia are required to register with Zambia News and Information Services (ZANIS), which issues press cards. As evidence of state control in this respect, Djokotoe described an incident in which journalists were told that they would need ZANIS accreditation to attend a presidential press conference. He added that the softball questioning at the conference showed that journalists had been intimidated.

## OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

### Zambia Objective Score: 1.83

The overall objective score remained virtually unchanged from compared to the 2008 score of 1.84. All indicators scored within a half point of the overall score, and few showed any real change. Indicator 3 (self-censorship) improved somewhat while indicator 6 (balance of entertainment and news) slipped by about the same magnitude.

Zambia has a self-regulatory system for maintaining professional journalism standards, but the media sector has not implemented this model successfully. MECOZ was established to implement and manage the self-regulatory model, but the council is undermined by the impression that it has failed to effectively address ethical concerns raised

## 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).

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by the public, and not all media houses have embraced the council. Panelists, however, remain convinced that self-regulation and peer review are the only options to enhance and maintain journalistic standards in the country.

When discussing the indicator regarding fair, objective, and well-sourced reporting, the panel agreed that Zambian media fall short. Poor fact checking, one-sided stories, a lack of follow-up, and sensationalism were all cited as areas in need of improvement. Changwe Kabwe said, "Some reporters don't bother to verify the facts they put in their stories... most stories have no background information, and follow-up reporting is rare." Djokotoe agreed, saying, "News reports tend to be single-sourced, and where they are multi-sourced, you have different people saying the same thing to endorse an organization's agenda." He has seen little improvement in professional standards over the years, he said, which does not "bode well for the nation." Many participants argued that these problems cannot be traced to inadequate training of reporters, but rather are reflective of the failure of editors and managers to set and demand professional standards.

These views were not unanimously held, however. Kabwela argued that "The profession of journalism in Zambia has continued to grow and improve for the better over the years. The country's training institutions have continued to train good journalists, who have managed to operate professionally in various media organizations." While investigative journalism needs to be cultivated, journalists do provide quality information, she said.

Panelists agreed, however, that the lack of unanimous support for MECOZ has caused problems related to setting and following ethical standards. As noted last year, MECOZ still has no real power to enforce ethical practice. Matibini observed that the failure of MECOZ to provide a model to promote and maintain standards tempts politicians to propose an alternative. "The proposal should be a warning to journalists," he said, and stressed that "self-regulation is supposed to be a mechanism of defense against statutory regulation."

In 2008, Minister of Information and Broadcasting Services General Ronnie Shikapwasha warned of some parliamentarians calling for statutory regulation of the media; this year, he registered the government's concern over declining levels of professional conduct in some sectors of the industry. In May this year, media bodies such as the University of Zambia's Department of Mass Communication, MISA Zambia, Catholic Media Services, Zambia Union of Journalists, *The Post*, The Zambia Media Women Association, and MECOZ reported to the Parliamentary Committee on Information and Broadcasting. In their submissions, they agreed that media self-regulation is essential, but MECOZ needs an overhaul to make it effective. The submissions were made under the joint theme: "The role of the media in national stability and the efficiency of the Media Ethics Council in protecting and promoting media ethics."

As for the indicator gauging whether journalists and editors are practicing self-censorship, the panel agreed that this practice is prevalent, particularly among the state-owned media. According to Changwe Kabwe, "Self-censorship exists especially for journalists and media managers who work in government institutions." Makomani agreed: "The fear of losing one's job if one does not 'toe the line' leads to great self-censorship," he said. For Djokotoe, the issue of self-censorship is unlikely to change, "given that journalists seem more willing to keep their jobs at all costs than to do what is professionally right."

In discussing the indicator dealing with journalists covering key events and issues, the panel agreed that Zambian journalists perform very badly. "News must enhance development, but journalists have no passion for their jobs," observed Makomani. Djokotoe said that one problem is that "The sense of what's 'key' remains warped. For instance, maize, the national staple, is a key issue that is never reported as such. But food security is inextricably linked to national security, though it is not perceived as such." Djokotoe also said that media content is a problem because "there is too much opinion masquerading as news."

Media salaries are low, the panel agreed. Some panelists find that low pay does contribute to corruption, with reporters and editors actively soliciting gifts to cover certain stories or feature them more prominently. However, Pat Mwase argued that salary levels have nothing to do with corruption because "being corrupt is a cancer...and greed is the central issue around corruption." Phiri pointed out that in May, Shikapwasha challenged media owners to pay journalists better. Phiri also decried what he called "institutional corruption," through which organizations or institutions such as mobile phone service provider Zain sponsor news bulletins on both radio and television stations.

Djokotoe agreed, saying that “allowing a bank to sponsor news is treasonable.”

As for the balance between news and entertainment programming, panelists agreed that for print, advertising takes up too much space, while radio has too much music and not enough news and information programming. Phiri said, “The media, especially broadcast media, tends to be overly entertainment biased, while print tends to be more politically biased.”

In terms of technical facilities and equipment for gathering, producing, and distributing news, the panel agreed that Zambia is far behind the rest of the world. Mwiinga noted that the media industry’s failure to invest in technology causes many problems, such as distribution delays that particularly affect people living outside the capital. However, he noted, “People watch foreign stations, which give them up-to-date news.” Echoing Mwiinga’s sentiments, Phiri called for increased investment in both print and broadcast media. Newspapers need to replace aging presses, while broadcasters need to shift to digital technology, he said.

The indicator measuring niche reporting in Zambia did not change significantly from last year’s MSI; the panelists agreed that their country has little niche reporting. Henry Kabwe observed that niche reporting happens only after sponsored workshops, and it seldom lasts for very long. Mwiinga agreed, arguing that there is no quality niche reporting, and “no analysis of issues and events, just [reporting of] what people say.” He attributed the shortcoming to a lack of high-caliber training.

### OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

#### Zambia Objective Score: 2.05

This objective, though bringing in the second highest score, did not change significantly from the 2008 MSI. Indicator 2 (citizen access to domestic or international media) scored the highest within this objective, about two-thirds of a point higher than the overall score. Indicators 3 (state media are non-partisan and serve the public interest) performed the poorest, lagging behind the objective score by nearly a full point.

In terms of the plurality of affordable public and private sources, the panel agreed generally that news sources in Zambia have proliferated over the last 10 years. “From just one television/radio channel (ZNBC), we now have more than five television channels, and 10 radio stations in the city (Lusaka), in addition to community radio stations across the country,” Chitamfya said. “It is a trend that is likely to be

*“From just one television/radio channel (ZNBC), we now have more than five television channels, and 10 radio stations in the city (Lusaka), in addition to community radio stations across the country,” Chitamfya said.*

sustained, going by the growing number of new applications for broadcasting licenses. Community news channels are increasingly gaining popularity, as they address issues closer to the community.”

Despite the blossoming of radio stations, panelists agreed that access to a variety of news sources depends upon people’s economic status, which helps to explain why the score for this indicator dropped significantly. Changwe Kabwe observed that the Internet reaches most parts of the country, but is limited typically to people who have access from their offices or who can afford to visit Internet cafés—where rates are high and download times frustratingly slow. Newspapers are relatively expensive, compared to prices in more developed countries. Newspapers can cost as much as \$0.58 in a country where 70 percent of the people are poor, Changwe Kabwe noted. He also observed that “Coverage is mainly local, not national. A few media houses do attempt nationwide coverage. People in the larger cities and some small towns enjoy greater access than villagers, because they can afford to buy a newspaper and to own a radio or a television set.”

#### 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 Phiri said, "Ownership of private media is not overly transparent, and very few people know who owns what."*

The panelists said that citizens' access to domestic or international media is generally unrestricted. Except for cost, Internet access is not restricted, and with the powerful radio receivers and satellite television in the country, international access can be characterized as virtually unlimited.

As for whether or not the state or public media reflect the views of the entire political spectrum, are non-partisan, and serve the public interest, panelists said that the country is too centralized, resulting in greater coverage of people at the center. Phiri observed that the state-owned media tend to be overly biased toward the government and the ruling party, while private media betrays a bias in favor of the opposition.

The panelists noted that Zambia does not have independent news agencies to gather and distribute news for print and broadcast media. The one private news agency identified, Palesa, deals almost exclusively with agricultural news.

Panelists agreed that ZANIS, the country's only news agency, is government-owned and cannot be regarded as independent.

Panelists said that independent broadcast media do produce their own news programs, although the quality is poor. Stations also tend to lack distinguishing characteristics, often mirroring each other. Liwena argued that community media do not even cover the local communities they purport to serve, because they want to sound like the mainstream media—displaying a lack of confidence in their own voices.

Zambian media ownership information is not made public. As Phiri said, "Ownership of private media is not overly transparent, and very few people know who owns what." He argued that although one could go to the Registrar of Companies to determine ownership, this is not adequate. Mwase said that "most media houses don't even have a company profile," and emphasized the need for even for small houses to have one.

Additionally, the panelists said that the media fail to cover a broad spectrum of social interests, and Zambia has no minority-language information sources. Henry Kabwe said, "There has not been a deliberate effort to seek out issues pertaining to minority groups. The political environment also restricts coverage of certain issues, thus suppressing minority views." Additionally, Edem Djokotoe pointed out that the uneducated are typically ignored as sources. "The view of who is a source is narrowed. There is a misconception that when people talk about politics, it is party politics. But

politics is a very broad topic. This narrow definition will result in one-dimensional news." Mwase said that Zambia has a diversity of voices—but the media serves up the same voices repeatedly. She said even independent media depend heavily upon the same sources, and the same handful of guests is repeatedly given platforms to speak on radio talk show programs such as "Face the Media" and "Good Governance."

## OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

### Zambia Objective Score: 1.73

Although the score for this objective went up significantly from last year's 1.40, it is still Zambia's weakest objective. Almost all of the indicators scored below the threshold of near-sustainability, except for indicators 3 (advertising agencies support an advertising market) and 5 (independent media do not receive government subsidies). All indicators scored within a half-point of the overall objective score, save indicator 7 (audience and circulation research), which was the lowest-scoring indicator in the entire Zambia study, coming in nearly a point behind the objective score.

Panelists agreed that most media outlets are not run efficiently and have failed to find ways to reduce production costs. The panelists also bemoaned widespread poor management skills, and the lack of research available to improve planning. Djokotoe said that "There is a tendency to over-employ, and management is top-heavy," and Mwase pointed to the lack of financial management skills in particular. Furthermore, most community media outlets have not even begun to view their operations as businesses. Solwezi FCC Radio station manager John Kamwanga

### 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.

observed, “Community media is failing to hire professionals to manage accounting, marketing, and human resource functions, because of limited resources.” He cited these as the major factors preventing community media outlets from operating as efficiently and sustainably as possible. Agreeing that most outlets do not run efficiently and profitably, Mwiinga pointed out that Mazabuka Community Radio is only now coming up with a business plan, although it has been operating for about five years.

According to Changwe Kabwe, “The management of most independent media outlets leaves much to be desired, and the editorial independence of most media outlets is questionable. This is largely because business interests sometimes become more important than telling a good story. In situations where a certain story may damage the corporate image of a company which also runs adverts on that media outlet, sponsors sometimes ask editors to understand the implications of running such a story on the relationship between the advertiser and the media company—and it is clear that in most cases the story will be withdrawn.”

In considering whether media receive revenue from a multitude of sources, panelists noted that print media receive revenue from advertising and circulation sales, while the electronic media receive revenue from advertising and program sponsorships. The panelists also commented that the imperative to generate revenue causes many media managers to throw advertising standards to the wind. “Anything goes,” Mwiinga said, referring to the fact that managers, desperate for revenue, face continuous pressure to accept all manner of advertisements.

As for the indicator dealing with advertising agencies and related industries supporting an advertising market, panelists noted that advertising agencies exist only in Lusaka, and media outside the capital benefit very little—if any—from their business. These media houses tend to approach clients directly because they do not feel well represented by agencies, according to the panelists. Djokotoe noted that all newspapers knock on the same doors for advertisements, and yet a lot of businesses do not advertise or understand why they should. He wondered why these companies are seemingly never approached.

According to the panel, advertising revenue as a percentage of total revenue is in line with accepted standards at commercial outlets. The panel cited the example of print media, which draws about 60 percent of its revenue from advertising and 40 percent from copies sold.

The panel confirmed that the government does not subsidize independent media. However, as noted in last year’s MSI,

*Changwe Kabwe dismissed the research results provided by some of the research companies, saying, “It works well for such companies and advertisers, but not the media.”*

some firms do benefit from preferential treatment in terms of the placement of government advertising.

Once again, the panel reported that no media outlet has commissioned meaningful market research recently to formulate strategic plans, enhance advertising revenue, or tailor products to the needs and interests of audiences. Mwiinga noted that programming is simply not based on research. This is especially true in community media, where, according to Liwena, “Market research is very difficult.” Changwe Kabwe dismissed the research results provided by some of the research companies, saying, “It works well for such companies and advertisers, but not the media.” He questioned the methodology used by some research firms, and observed that many of these firms are critically understaffed.

The panel also agreed that trustworthy broadcast ratings and circulation figures are not available to guide the media or advertisers. Phiri pointed out that existing circulation figures are highly unreliable. Mwase agreed, noting, “We don’t really have a rating system. A rating system is based on independent auditors, which we don’t have.”

## **OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS**

### **Zambia Objective Score: 2.03**

Along with Objective 3, this was the only objective to score in the near-sustainable category—although just barely—and the overall score declined from last year’s 2.20. Indicator 1 (trade associations) scored about three-quarters of a point lower than the overall objective score; all other indicators scored within a half-point.

As for trade associations representing the interests of private media owners and providing member services, the panel agreed this is not happening. “There are no trade associations in Zambia as of now. There used to be the Master Printers and Publisher’s Association, but it died out. An attempt to revive it did not succeed,” Phiri said.

Panelists said that Zambia does have a number of professional associations that have helped improve the lot of journalists in

*“There are no trade associations in Zambia as of now. There used to be the Master Printers and Publisher’s Association, but it died out. An attempt to revive it did not succeed,” Phiri said.*

the country. “Professional associations have done their best to protect the rights of journalists,” Djokotoe argued, “but they need to do a lot more to raise the technical pedigree of professionals, as seen with lawyers.”

The panelists also pointed to specific areas in which NGOs have supported the media, although Phiri pointed out that the country’s polarizing politics define which NGOs support

#### SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS FUNCTION IN THE PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA.

##### **SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS INDICATORS:**

- > Trade associations represent the interests of private media owners and provide member services.
- > Professional associations work to protect journalists’ rights.
- > NGOs support free speech and independent media.
- > Quality journalism degree programs that provide substantial practical experience exist.
- > Short-term training and in-service training programs allow journalists to upgrade skills or acquire new skills.
- > Sources of newsprint and printing facilities are in private hands, apolitical, and unrestricted.
- > Channels of media distribution (kiosks, transmitters, Internet) are private, apolitical, and unrestricted.

the media. He cited the example of the Transparency International Zambia Chapter, which supports the media in confronting corruption. According to Changwe Kabwe, “Civil society in Zambia largely supports the media, and the ongoing media law reforms have been embraced by the civil society. In situations where a journalist’s rights are violated, there is always a huge uproar from civil society, denouncing such violations. Most of the activities aimed at raising public opinion in the fight for media law reforms have been supported by the most vocal members of civil society.”

The panel agreed that Zambia offers quality journalism degree programs that provide substantial practical experience. However, Djokotoe was quick to point out that “graduates are in transit,” and most do not work for long for the mainstream media. Instead, they tend to move on to jobs with public relations firms, embassies, and NGOs.

Zambia does have short-term training and in-service training programs allowing journalists to upgrade skills or acquire new skills, but panelists agreed that the programs are not very effective. Many are sponsored by donors with particular agendas that are not necessarily aligned with the media industry’s needs. Liwena bemoaned the lack of broadcaster short-training programs, which he said has contributed to sub-par standards in the field.

The panel agreed that sources of newsprint and printing facilities are private, apolitical, and unrestricted. Similarly, panelists consider channels of media distribution (kiosks, transmitters, Internet) generally private, apolitical, and unrestricted. However, they stressed that the distribution infrastructure is not well established. Changwe Kabwe said that in many cases, a distribution company’s ability “to deliver on time is questionable, and its accounting systems leave much to be desired.”

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## List of Panel Participants

**Changwe Kabwe**, news editor, HotFM, Lusaka

**Chansa Kabwela**, news editor, *The Post*, Lusaka

**Edem Djokotoe**, managing consultant, Primus Media, Lusaka

**Henry Kabwe**, chairperson, Media Institute of Southern Africa-Zambia, Lusaka

**Mukaya Livena**, station manager, Radio Lyambai, Mongu

**Masautso Phiri**, freelance media consultant, Lusaka

**Patrick Matibini**, managing partner, Pat Mat Legal Practitioners, Lusaka

**Albert Mwiinga**, station manager, Radio Mazabuka, Mazabuka

**Mutemwa Makomani**, journalism lecturer, Evelyn Hone College, Lusaka

**John Kamwanga**, station manager, Solwezi FCC Radio, Solwezi

**Pat Mwase**, managing editor, *The Mining Mirror*, Copperbelt

**Caristo Chitamfya**, head of productions and operations, Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation, Lusaka

## Moderator and Author

**Kenny Makungu**, senior lecturer, University of Zambia, Lusaka

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