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MALI

After overthrowing Moussa Traoré in 1991, General Amadou Toumani Touré led Mali in a democratic transition that was described as exemplary—culminating with the election of Alpha Oumar Konaré, who served two terms of office. With Touré’s election as president in 2002, Mali became a yardstick for democracy in Africa in just under a decade. Completing the picture, Mali’s press enjoys a number of advantages, including relatively free media legislation compared with the rest of the continent, although there are still areas of concern for the media community.

Today, out of over 219 authorizations to establish private newspapers, there are only about 40 that appear more or less regularly. About 250 FM radio stations blanket the country, without counting the eight Malian Office of Radio and Television Broadcasting (ORTM) stations in the regional capitals. In the Bamako district alone, there are 16 radio stations plus the two public channels, while Sikasso and Kayes regions have the most stations, at 52 and 43, respectively. Kidal region has the poorest service, with just seven. As for television, apart from the national channel, people can choose almost 150 rebroadcasted channels in the major cities. The MSI panelists also highlighted the promising growth of the Internet, although this is mostly concentrated in the cities where it is more affordable.

For the print media, apart from the national French-language daily newspaper *L’Essor*, which covers all the major cities, 90 percent of private press circulation goes to Bamako. There are also media outlets that send out news in local languages, covering the Bambara-, Fula-, and Soninke-language areas. More and more local press outlets are also springing up in some large cities.

This proliferation is the result of an environment that is officially favorable, given the legal framework governing the media sector in Mali. Yet despite the burgeoning number of media in Mali, problems do still exist: the economic context is difficult, and there is a lack of well-trained personnel. These problems greatly affect the quality of the newspapers and radio programming, which tend to favor entertainment.

MALI AT A GLANCE

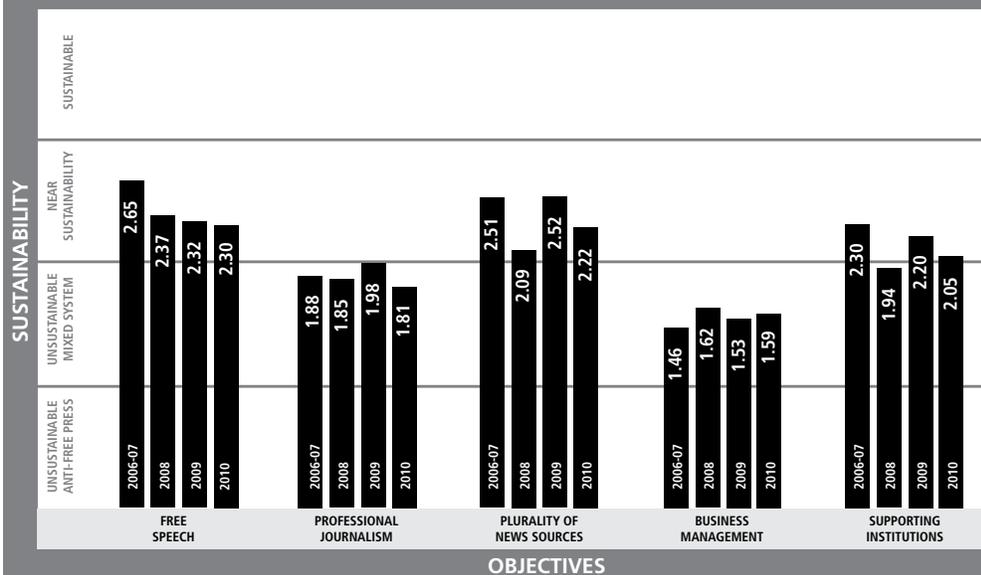
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 14,159,904 (July 2011 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Bamako
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Mande 50% (Bambara, Malinke, Soninke), Peul 17%, Voltaic 12%, Songhai 6%, Tuareg and Moor 10%, other 5% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Muslim 90%, Christian 1%, indigenous beliefs 9% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages:** French (official), Bambara 80%, numerous African languages (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2010-Atlas):** \$9,146 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2011)
- > **GNI per capita (2010-PPP):** \$1,020 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2011)
- > **Literacy rate:** 46.4% (male 53.5%, female 39.6%) (2003 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** President Amadou Toumani Toure (since June 8, 2002)

MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:**
Print: 10 daily newspapers, 30 periodicals; Radio Stations: 259; Television Stations: 2 including the public channel and Africable
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** N/A
- > **Broadcast ratings:** N/A
- > **News agencies:** The Malian Press and Advertisement Agency (state-owned)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** N/A
- > **Internet usage:** 249,800 (2009 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: MALI



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

Mali Objective Score: 2.30

Mali's constitution guarantees the freedom of expression and access to public information, and these rights are supported by the legislation that governs the press and access to information. Article 4 of the constitution provides that every person has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, worship, opinion, expression, and creation with respect to the law. Also, an independent institution ensures equal access for all to the state media.

Tiégoum Boubèye Maïga, director-general of Algaïta, a communications agency, noted that beyond a doubt, one of the strong points for journalism in Mali is the lack of heavy restrictions. Law 00-46/AN-RM of July 7, 2000, on the legal regime for the press and press offenses, governs press freedom in Mali and protects free speech (with exceptions for offenses related to racial, national, or religious hate speech and incitement to murder). In addition to this legislative support for press freedom, the panelists said that the authorities do not apply much pressure on journalists—but that journalists are, moreover, not necessarily critical of the authorities.

But still, media professionals face many challenges. The authorities recognize this, and they have undertaken a review procedure for all the legal instruments that govern the media. Moustaph Maïga, director of publication of

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In terms of licensing, a 1992 decree set out conditions and procedures to authorize and suspend private FM radio broadcasting. There are now close to 250 radio stations up and running across the country. To launch a station, operators must be of Malian nationality, be based in Malian territory, and observe a set of obligations and specifications. A frequency allocation commission provides technical opinions to guide decisions by the relevant ministries. Joint ministerial orders are required to issue, suspend, or withdraw authorization. However, the panelists criticized the roughly organized commission, and Sékouba Samake, journalist and editor-in-chief of *InfoMatin* and secretary-general of the Association of Journalists for the Promotion of Professionalism (AJPP), described the licensing process as random and unpredictable.

Officially, the media do not benefit from any specific tax advantages, but at the same time the legislation is not deemed restrictive. Tiégoum Boubeyé Maïga explained that no specific tax regime guides the media, and the existing legislation, such as the VAT (value-added tax) exemption for the press, is not implemented.

According to the panelists, in addition to the absence of social norms to encourage the freedom of speech, crimes against journalists occur with impunity. While such crimes do not take place every day, those that occur tend to go unpunished. Sadiou Yattara, a journalist and coordinator for the Institute for Democracy and Education in the Media (IDEM), bemoaned the fact that not only are journalists unprotected, but they are also blamed as a source of problems and stigmatized.

A U.S. Department of State report on human rights in Mali described a couple of incidents that occurred in late 2009. For example, in November the authorities arrested Diakaridia Yossi, a *L'Indépendant* journalist. Yossi was covering police

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.

violence against demonstrators protesting the detention of Mossa Ag Acharatmane and Aboubacrine Ag Fadil for treason. The report explained, "Yossi was apparently mistaken for one of the protestors and allegedly suffered several blows from police batons. According to press reports, Yossi was released from custody, and the director of the National Police, Niame Keita, in a meeting with journalist associations, expressed regret for the incident and provided 25,000 CFA francs (\$50) to offset Yossi's medical expenses."¹ The State Department report also described the arrest of a radio journalist: "In December 2009 Noumouke Sidibe, a journalist for Radio Kayira, a network of stations critical of the government, was arrested in Kita and charged with inciting the July 2009 Kita riots through his radio broadcasts. Sidibe, who had been highly critical of local authorities in his reporting, was released on January 6 after an investigative judge determined he had not been on the air the day he was alleged to have been inciting riots."²

ORTM and the Malian Press and Advertising Agency (AMAP) are the two public media bodies established by the state. Although they are publicly administered, autonomous financial institutions, the panelists cautioned that their economic independence cannot be guaranteed, as they are subsidized by the state. The minister of communications (who, according to the panelists, certainly has a political axe to grind) chairs the board of governors, and various ministries recommend the directors. ORTM and AMAP also receive preferential treatment by state institutions in terms of access to information. Nevertheless, the panelists feel that the public press is relatively free from excessive political interference.

There are some exceptions to the fairly supportive legislation for the press—as seen in the treatment of libel. Under a 2000 law, libel is a criminal offense, and the burden of proof rests on journalists, rather than the offended party. Alexis Kalambry, director of publication for *Les Echos*, observed that, paradoxically, in cases of theft or any other kind of crime the plaintiff must provide the proof. Even so, it is rare for Malian journalists to be taken to court, and when they are, the cases are frequently settled out of court through social dispute-resolution mechanisms. Furthermore, the legislation failed to take into account Internet Service Providers or website hosting services, so they are unaffected.

Regarding access to public information, Filifing Diakit , chair of the Network of Journalists for the Protection of Human Rights (RJPRODH), noted that a 1998 law governing relations between the administration and users of public services takes

¹ 2010 Human Rights Report: Mali. 2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, State Department: April 8, 2011. Available at: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154357.htm>

² Ibid, State Department.

the place of a law on freedom of information. Although the law makes many dossiers, reports, studies, statistical accounts, directives, and circulars containing interpretations of positive law freely accessible, it excludes access to documents that could breach the confidentiality of discussions within the government, national defense secrecy, state security or public safety, the right to a private life, medical records, or, generally, information protected by law. Journalists make use of the law but note that it does not take some of their specific concerns, such as the need for rapid reaction times, into consideration.

International news is freely accessible to journalists, although cost is an issue in some cases. The Malian media have access to the Internet, which has become a major source of free information of all kinds. Much use was made of the Internet in the cities, in particular, where the cost is relatively affordable. Foreign news sources (such as Radio France Internationale, BBC Africa, Radio Beijing, Voice of America, Deutsche Welle, and so on) are broadcast on FM radio in Mali and are not subject to any specific regulation.

The only restrictions on entry into the journalism profession relate to training and level. Article 4 of press Law 00-46/AN-RM states that journalists must have a degree in journalism or a degree in another area plus a year of experience in the profession. Their principal remunerated activity must be the collection, treatment, and dissemination of information and news in the context of a public or private media outlet, whether in the printed press, radio, or television. In practice, though, many journalists do not meet the conditions, as the profession is often no more than a temporary stopgap for jobseekers when all other options fail.

There is a press card commission, tasked with awarding and withdrawing press cards. Also, journalists with or without a press card generally need further accreditation to cover special events. In reality, many people do not have press cards but manage to work anyway. Otherwise, the government exerts no influence on entry into the profession, and journalists are free to form organizations to defend their interests.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Mali Objective Score: 1.81

Although the panelists said there are some well-trained journalists, given the high rate of unemployment there are also some poorly qualified people who chose the profession because of the ease of entering the field. The large number of press outlets—particularly in radio, followed by the printed

press—means that journalists often do not get the managerial supervision they need to become proper writers. Also, the insecure, poorly paid nature of the work, combined with the absence of job security or a collective agreement, sometimes leads to a large number of mediocre journalists.

Thus, the panelists' assessment of professional standards in Mali is lukewarm. Although reporting reflects a varied cross-section of national public life (society, economy, politics, religion, culture, etc.), professionalism is unsatisfactory. For example, unverified information is common, although the panelists acknowledge that some journalists are making more effort to verify their sources. Ténèfing Traoré, an ORTM journalist, noted also that journalists lack adequate tools to conduct in-depth work; she commented that a journalist's effectiveness depends partially on having the right equipment.

Malian journalists developed a code of professional conduct and ethics, inspired by international standards, as long ago as 1991. Over a decade later, the Observatory for Press Conduct and Ethics (ODEP), was launched to help monitor press ethics. Still, many journalists either are not aware of or choose not to observe the professional code, as journalistic excesses of all kinds are seen. For example, some journalists violate the spirit of professional solidarity by attacking other journalists in order to defend politicians.

News is rarely balanced and not objective, a phenomenon that Tiégoum Boubèye Maïga said is explained by certain journalists and sources conniving together. Furthermore, the panelists believe that it is becoming more common for media professionals to accept payments or gifts—supposedly to cover transportation costs—to cover events.

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).

Still, many journalists either are not aware of or choose not to observe the professional code, as journalistic excesses of all kinds are seen. For example, some journalists violate the spirit of professional solidarity by attacking other journalists in order to defend politicians.

According to the editorial offices, journalists are not to touch certain subjects. Social, economic, and cultural reasons are generally the roots of self-censorship among journalists in Mali, under the threat of job security or even physical safety.

However, with the exception of certain social issues and information protected by Law 98 012 on relations between the administration and users of public services, the press covers nearly all subjects, although the panelists noted that politics dominates most of the media space. Journalists face no obstacles covering events related to domestic or international security.

The panelists agreed that low salaries, combined with social and cultural practices and personal connections to certain sources, could all tempt journalists into corruption. To boost their income, journalists often turn out advertorials thinly disguised as articles to maintain the support of politicians or other powerful individuals. Journalists, even those employed by the state, have no special status, another factor in the relatively poor pay. There is also a very big gap between those working in the private sector and those in the public sector. In the private sector, salaries hover around the Guaranteed Inter-professional Minimum Salary, at a little over CFA 30,000 (\$60), whereas in the public sector salaries are more or less aligned with those paid other state officials, starting at CFA 80,000 (\$160) for entry-level workers.

Tiégoum Boubèye Maïga shared his view that low salaries, or even no salaries, cannot be taken as a serious explanation for abuses, although it is true that journalists' material conditions merit particular attention.

Considering the balance of entertainment programming to news, panelists said that even a quick glance at radio and television content reveals a bias toward entertainment, which drowns out the news and prevents people from getting interested in more serious issues. However, the panelists recognized that some radio stations, including the national channel, are making an effort to provide more varied programming.

National radio, which employs relatively professional personnel, produces programs on a national scale of relatively strong quality.

Press outlets in Mali are poorly equipped and reliant on obsolete facilities. With the exception of national radio and a few private radio stations in the capital equipped with digital technology, radio stations up country use very rudimentary equipment.

Assessing the quality of niche reporting and programming, the panelists noted that a few journalists are livening up reporting with quality specialized content. For the most part, though, the print media concentrate their efforts on reporting from the field and basic reporting rather than investigative work. Yet, more and more journalists are specializing, and often producing, high-quality articles.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

Mali Objective Score: 2.22

Malian citizens have multiple news sources, both domestic and international, to turn to for news. However, the quality of news is inconsistent, given the difficulties in accessing certain types of sources and the lack of adequate resources relative to journalists' deadlines.

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.

The French-language printed press comprises about 40 newspapers, including the national daily, for city-dwellers. There are also publications in local languages (Bambara, Fula, Soninke, etc.) for people in rural areas.

Radio, by far, is the most popular and accessible media platform. A grid of 249 private radio stations, not to mention national radio and its eight regional stations that provide radio coverage to an estimated 80 percent of the population, blankets the country. ORTM broadcasts news, cultural, educational, and entertainment programs in French, the official language, as well as the 10 main local languages. There are also five foreign radio stations that are relayed in whole or in part.

In addition to the many print and radio choices, there are three companies in Mali that rebroadcast packages of about 150 encrypted foreign television channels. The state has lost its de facto monopoly on television, with the unauthorized launch of the private Africable channel. In addition, the Internet is really taking off, as access improves.

Access to domestic and international media is not restricted for urban areas, but in the rural parts of Mali the lack of electricity presents a major obstacle. Rebroadcasting foreign radio is not yet subject to regulation in Mali.

As for the public media, ORTM is obligated to carry out a public-service mission, and panelists agreed the public media are taking some initiative in this direction. A regulatory body, the National Committee for Equal Access to the State Media, is in place to ensure equal access for Malian citizens. The public media, however, are criticized for prioritizing institutional news, seemingly in the service of the country's leadership.

The only news agency is the Malian Press and Advertising Agency (AMAP). A public news agency, AMAP is the principal source of domestic news for the various publications in Mali. It employs about 50 correspondents and covers the whole country. Malian newspapers also turn to international agencies such as AFP, Reuters, Panapress, AP, etc. as sources.

In terms of program production, the panelists said that community radio stations broadcast their own programs—using their own personnel, who sometimes lack adequate qualifications—to meet at least some of the needs of local people. National radio, which employs relatively professional personnel, produces programs on a national scale of relatively strong quality.

Transparency of ownership is not guaranteed in the sources of funding for private press outlets, and ownership of the private media remains unclear. By law, publication directors are required to be professional journalists with a certain

degree of experience, the panelists noted, but certain politicians are suspected of owning newspapers.

The panelists report that the Malian media display a broad spectrum of public-interest content. In various localities, community radio programs reflect social, economic, and cultural realities with local-language programming. ORTM also provides programs in 10 national languages. Nevertheless, the panelists criticized the public media for failing to reflect the plurality of opinion in Mali.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Mali Objective Score: 1.59

According to Tiégoum Boubèye Maïga, despite many well-intentioned efforts to set up properly managed, independent press enterprises in Mali, the best intentions never seem to succeed. Instead, press outlets are essentially artisanal affairs. Most were created to support the country's efforts toward democracy, with little emphasis on more entrepreneurial visions. Panelists also underscored the brain drain of media professionals moving away and taking their skills elsewhere, or setting up their own, smaller media outlets so that they could become co-directors. In general, for a variety of reasons, the media environment has not favored the emergence of sustainable press businesses.

Press outlets are not generally viable. Sound bookkeeping is not a priority, and personnel to attend to the business end of the enterprises are not well qualified. With insufficient financial bases and without external funding, such media outlets have difficulty generating any profit. Additionally,

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.

In the private sector, the two telephone operating companies are essentially the only other major advertising sources, as they battle it out with each other in their ads. Other private companies are not in the same league in terms of advertising buying power.

there is no high-performance distribution network, with circulations ranging from just 500 to 1,500 copies. Newspaper printing is a haphazard business for publishers, who do not always have the resources to pay fixed fees.

The lack of revenue is a challenge for all types of media; sales by street sellers and advertising do not bring in enough income. The state allocates an annual subsidy to press outlets, but the main concern that panelists expressed in relation to this is that the amount is inadequate relative to the constantly increasing number of beneficiaries. Meanwhile, the state subsidizes about 70 percent of public media budgets. They also receive subsidies from technical and financial partners for specific endeavors.

The state media body, AMAP, monopolizes the advertising scene, while private communications and advertising agencies, which generally cannot yet be described as professional, play a lesser role. Tiégoum Boubèye Maïga, speaking as director-general of the communications agency Algaïta, explained that the state almost exclusively dominates the advertising market as the largest source of advertising and announcements. In the private sector, the two telephone operating companies are essentially the only other major advertising sources, as they battle it out with each other in their ads. Other private companies are not in the same league in terms of advertising buying power.

In this limited advertising sector, the national daily *L'Essor*, the AMAP outlet, raked in most of the advertising business, legal announcements, and subscription sales. All of the public services subscribe to *L'Essor*, and their announcements, advertising, and so on are automatically published in the "public" newspaper.

Otherwise, representatives of the state, the most significant advertiser in terms of spending, negotiated individually with the outlets of their choice, and that influenced content, according to the panelists.

Regarding the state subsidies, the government provides the press with CFA 200 million (\$400,000) in direct aid. To receive the subsidy, press outlets must meet certain criteria in terms

Maison de la Presse offers advanced training for various types of media professionals. The umbrella organization, founded in 1996, receives an annual subsidy of CFA 30 million (\$62,000) by the state to provide in-service training.

of eligibility and intent, defined in article 7 of Decree 03 264/P RM of July 7, 2003. The same criteria are used for all press outlets.

The task of distributing the direct subsidies falls to a committee chaired by the minister of communications. Press outlets also fight for indirect assistance through tax breaks.

In Mali, market research has not guided the creation of any press outlets. Furthermore, according to the panelists, there are no reliable statistics on media activities. The circulation figures published are widely considered unreliable.

Ramata Diaouré, editor-in-chief of the biweekly French-language newspaper *22 Septembre*, expressed her view that the complicating factor is the lack of any yardstick or measuring system, along the lines of the French broadcasting ratings bureau OJD or the Audimat monitoring device, to supply unbiased data for audience ratings.

Although there are no organizations to measure media audience ratings and circulation figures, Mali does have polling companies that often carry out commissioned research related to print and broadcast media.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Mali Objective Score: 2.05

Various supporting institutions work to strengthen Mali's independent media. Support services from domestic and international institutions are very beneficial, not only to media professionals but also to their outlets. However, the panelists said that the many professional associations in existence are ineffective.

There are three associations of media owners and managers in Mali: the Association of Private Press Publishers (ASSEP), the Malian Union of Free Radio and Television Broadcasters (URTEL), and a new association of print press owners and managers. But according to the panelists, these associations

are increasingly marked by diffidence. Although they used to be relatively well organized, internal conflicts have weakened them to the point that they no longer stand up for the interests of their members.

As for organizations representing media professionals, there are about 60 or more specialized professional associations and networks that promote and protect the interests of their members, but they focus primarily on providing training rather than advocacy work.

Furthermore, almost all of them are based in Bamako; there is very little representation up country. Most of the associations belong to an umbrella organization, Maison de la Presse.

There is just one union, the National News, Press and Book Industry Union (SNPIL), specifically for the public media. Some panelists expressed the view that SNPIL fails to represent most journalists, leading to attempts to create a new union. Unfortunately, though, these efforts have amounted to nothing.

There are nongovernmental associations and organizations, including the International League for Human Rights and the Malian Association for Human Rights, that monitor the strength of freedom of expression and the independent media. The panelists believe that these NGOs are generally relevant and committed to their mission.

As far as formal training efforts are concerned, the new journalism training college announced to be opening in the 2009-2010 university year, in response to the poor state of professional standards, appears to have been delayed. In the absence of a school of journalism at the national level, there are organizations that offer training programs in communications and marketing. According to the panelists,

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.

graduates of these programs enter the employment market lacking adequate qualifications to enter the profession. Most of the more professional journalists graduated from foreign colleges; they returned to Mali to use local outlets as stepping stones before moving on to work in organizations that pay better.

Maison de la Presse offers advanced training for various types of media professionals. The umbrella organization, founded in 1996, receives an annual subsidy of CFA 30 million (\$62,000) by the state to provide in-service training. Furthermore, Maison de la Presse receives additional financial support from domestic NGOs and international partners for its capacity-building work. Depending on their specific needs, some associations also provide training sessions.

With the exception of the French-language national daily *L'Essor* and other state-owned local-language publications issued by AMAP, newspapers are privately owned. AMAP has its own printing press, as do the private daily newspapers *L'Indépendant*, *Les Echos*, and *Kabako*. All other printing houses in Mali are completely private and operate without state interference. However, as the state is the largest client, many printers tread carefully to preserve the state business.

For both print and broadcast media, distribution channels are free, but many papers are sold exclusively in Bamako. The very few newspapers that go up country arrive late. There are regional newspapers such as *Le Ségovien* bimonthly, which is distributed in the region around Ségou, 200 kilometers from the capital. In the absence of a press distribution company, newspapers are most likely to be sold by street sellers.

The Internet is becoming more and more widely available. Although initially the government held a monopoly in this sector, through the Malian Telephone Company, the sector is now open to other companies, and the panelists consider it a promising development that many operators have carved out a presence in that market.

List of Panelists

Alexis Kalambry, journalist; publication manager, independent daily newspaper *Les Echos*, Bamako

Filifing Diakitè, journalist and chairman, Network of Journalists for the Protection of Human Rights, Bamako

Tènèfing Traoré, journalist, rural radio of the Office of Radio-Television Mali, Bamako

Moustaph Maïga, founder, *Le Ségovien*, Ségou

Sékouba Samaké, journalist, editor-in-chief, *Info-Matin*; secretary-general, Journalists Association for the Promotion of Professionalism, Bamako

Alou Djim, secretary general, Malian Union of Free Radio and Television Broadcasters; director, Radio Benkan, Bamako

Tiégom Boubèye Maïga, journalist and director general, Algaita Communication Agency, Bamako

Ramata Diaouré, journalist, *22 Septembre*, Bamako

Sadou Yattara, journalist, coordinator of the Institute for Democracy and Media Education, Bamako

Kassim Traoré, journalist, Radio Klédu; secretary-general, Organization of Young Reporters of Mali, Bamako

Moderator and Author

Mahamadou Talata Maïga, journalist and trainer, Bamako

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