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NIGERIA

After a significant improvement in the media environment in Nigeria in 2009 over the previous two years, the situation deteriorated just slightly in 2010 with the overall country average dropping from 2.23 in 2009 to 2.18 in 2010.

It is unclear how much of the media's decline resulted from the political crisis that dogged Nigeria for many months, beginning in 2009, related to the poor health of then-president Umaru Yar'Adua, which spilled over to the early part of 2010 until he died on May 5, 2010. Speculation in the media about the president's illness and the nature of his ailment frequently resulted in various attacks on the media. At least three journalists were killed in 2010, and others were arrested and faced civil litigation on defamation charges. Media organizations also endured raids and charges that they violated national security, and the government shut down some broadcast stations. There was clearly a heightened sense of general insecurity within the general population during this period, including for a substantial part of 2010, which progressively worsened with bomb attacks in public places.

Indications of Yar'Adua's poor health first became public knowledge in 2007, during the presidential election campaign, in which he was the clear front-runner. Amid the campaign in early 2007, Yar'Adua collapsed and was flown to Germany for treatment, igniting speculation across the country, including rumors that he had died. Although senior government officials and members of his ruling Peoples Democratic Party initially dismissed speculation about the president's health, it became obvious only a few months into his presidency that he suffered from a serious ailment, which affected the performance of his political functions. Rarely seen in public, he also frequently made foreign trips, particularly to Germany and Saudi Arabia, where he reportedly underwent medical treatment for an ailment that remained undisclosed for the better part of his presidency.

As the president's health apparently worsened, the media grew bolder in reporting on it, with fewer and fewer repercussions for journalists. In the latter part of the year, controversy and confusion trailed the ill-health of the president as he left the country to undergo treatment in Saudi Arabia without formally handing over to the vice president or anyone else to serve as acting president, as required by the 1999 Nigerian Constitution. Amid intermittent reports that the president was brain-damaged and had even died, Yar'Adua's ill-health triggered a major political crisis in the country, with in-fighting within the ruling party over succession, which resulted in political, economic, and social crises in Nigeria.

As in previous years, Objective 1 (legal and social protection of free speech) recorded the lowest score, with a 1.79, while Objective 5 (supporting institutions) scored the highest, at 2.70, consistent with the pattern established annually since 2007. Movements in all objectives were small: Objective 1 and Objective 2 (professional journalism) each recorded a minor drop in score. Only Objective 4 (business management) improved over previous MSI studies, rising from 2.02 in 2009 to 2.14 in 2010.

# NIGERIA AT A GLANCE

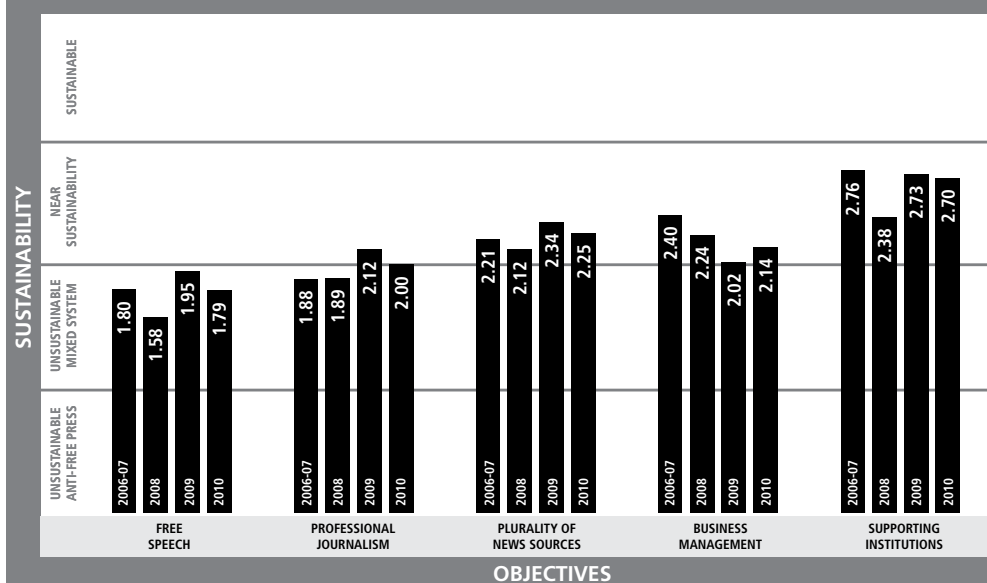
## GENERAL

- > **Population:** 155,215,573 (July 2011 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Abuja
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Hausa and Fulani 29%, Yoruba 21%, Igbo (Ibo) 18%, Ijaw 10%, Kanuri 4%, Ibibio 3.5%, Tiv 2.5% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Muslim 50%, Christian 40%, indigenous beliefs 10% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages:** English (official), Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo (Ibo), Fulani (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2009-Atlas):** \$186.4 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2011)
- > **GNI per capita (2009-PPP):** \$2,160 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2011)
- > **Literacy rate:** 68% (male 75.7%, female 60.6%) (2003 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** President Goodluck Jonathan (since May 5, 2010)

## MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** 95 reasonably regular newspapers (20 national dailies, 23 national weeklies, 10 regional dailies, 19 regional weeklies, 6 provincial or local dailies, and 17 provincial or local weeklies). 126 radio stations (16 privately owned, 27 not-for-profit campus radio station, 45 owned by the federal government, and 38 owned by various state governments). 104 television stations (15 privately owned, 57 owned by the federal government, and 32 owned by various state governments). (Source: National Broadcasting Commission website <http://www.nbc.gov.ng/index.php>)
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** No verifiable statistics exist; anecdotally *The Sun*, *The Punch*, *ThisDay*, and *The Guardian* (all privately owned) are regarded as the widest circulating newspapers; altogether Nigerian newspapers are said to circulate several million copies daily
- > **Broadcast ratings:** N/A
- > **News agencies:** News Agency of Nigeria (state-owned)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** N/A
- > **Internet usage:** 44 million (2009 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: NIGERIA



### 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

### Nigeria Objective Score: 1.79

The overall average score for this Objective was 1.79, a small drop from 1.95 in 2009. Most of the panelists feel that although the constitution guarantees the freedom of speech, other laws and practices that restrict media freedom undermine the effectiveness of the constitutional provisions.

Furthermore, according to Tunde Akanni, a journalism teacher in the Department of Journalism and School of Communication at the Lagos State University, "A number of obsolete, anti-press freedom laws remain on the books, although certain judicial pronouncements have practically invalidated them. Some of these are the handiwork of the colonial regime, including the Law of Sedition, Criminal Defamation, Secrecy Act and a couple of others." Akanni argued that despite the restoration of democratic rule in Nigeria in 1999, press freedom has not made substantial progress.

As for broadcast licensing, Akanni said the process is not fair; the president has sole discretion to grant broadcast licenses and is likely to favor his political party. Akanni added that the government's fear of criticism may also contribute to the licensing decisions. Despite the president's claim that the National Broadcasting Commission has sole power to grant licenses for community radio stations and he has no

*Akanni also stressed the trend toward re-centralizing the media. "All governments, at state and federal levels, have at least two broadcast stations located in each of the capitals of the 36 states, as well as the national capital," he said.*

recourse, not a single license has been granted since the pronouncement was made on October 19, 2010.

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For Omolola Anne Famuyiwa, project director of Cares Global Network and editor-in-chief of its publication, *Willows*, "Over the years, preference has been given to government owned stations. Though these media have not been set up solely for political reasons, they in no small way have become the mouthpieces of the government, federal or state. Fairness is expected in granting licenses, but lobbying and preferential treatment play a role." She described officials of the National Broadcasting Commission as the "rubber stamp of the government," saying the fear of removal from office and the strict control exercised over them keep them in check.

Funke Treasure Durodola, of the government-owned Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria in Lagos, also does not believe that the broadcast licensing process is completely fair and apolitical; even stations that meet all of the established criteria cannot be sure they will receive a license, she said. To illustrate, she pointed to the license granted to the Silverbird Group. She feels the license should have gone to Daar Communications, which has the facilities and infrastructure on the ground, and already broadcasts on a satellite channel.

Durodola said there is a temptation to describe the licensing process as fair because of the sheer number of broadcast stations in the cities. But, she argued, this is an insufficient basis to describe the process as fair because it is impossible to say how many applicants were denied broadcast licenses, and why they were denied, given the lack of transparency in the process. Edith Nnaji, a reporter at the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja, also questioned the fairness of granting licenses only for broadcast stations located in urban areas while the rural areas are completely neglected.

Market entry and the tax structure are generally considered fair across the board for all sectors, including the media—

## 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.

although in practice, some minor cases contradicted this general perception, as noted in last year's MSI.

As noted earlier, Nigerian journalists work in very dangerous conditions. Most seriously, three journalists were killed in April 2010. As the Committee to Protect Journalists reported, Muslim rioters killed two reporters working with a local Christian newspaper, while two gunmen shot dead court reporter Edo Sule Ugbagwu, from the private daily *The Nation*.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, Enato Isikul of the Bayelsa State Television in Yenogoa noted that kidnappings of media personnel, assault and battery of journalists, and seizures of media equipment by security agents were quite common during the year under review. Panelists heard a chilling account by Adolphus Okonkwo, the secretary of the Lagos State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), who also works as news editor with the Voice of Nigeria, Nigeria's external radio broadcasting organization, of his experience in the custody of kidnappers for a week in July 2010.

Okonkwo was abducted at gunpoint on July 11, 2010, a few days before the MSI panel discussion for the 2009 edition. He was abducted in Aba, Abia State, in southeastern Nigeria, along with Wahab Oba, the chairman of the union; Sylva Okereke, the assistant secretary; another journalist, Sola Oyeyipo and their driver, Azeez Yekini. The incident occurred while they were returning to Lagos in a van owned by NUJ after attending the union's National Executive Council meeting.

Their abductors demanded payment of a ransom of NGN 250 million (about \$1.66 million) to secure their release. However, they were released on July 18, 2010, after all the cash and equipment they had in their possession had been taken from them. Okonkwo, who was to have been a panelist for the 2009 panel discussion, was therefore unable to participate, but recounted for this year's panel how he and his colleagues were harassed and intimidated by their abductors. They were held in the middle of the forest under very harsh conditions, and kept constantly on the move at nights to avoid detection. He said they lived in constant fear for their lives, as they were frequently threatened with execution if the ransom was not paid.

Yewande Iwuoha, the head of news at Raypower FM, and Bose Olusola-Obasa, a correspondent with *Saturday Punch*, both opined that attacks against journalists are not diligently investigated or prosecuted, a view shared by all the other panelists.

<sup>1</sup> "Three Journalists Killed in Nigeria." Committee to Protect Journalists website: April 26, 2010. Available at: <http://cpj.org/2010/04/three-journalists-killed-in-nigeria.php> (Accessed October 24, 2011.)

Funmi Falobi, a reporter with the *Daily Independent* in Lagos, observed that state-owned media evidently enjoy preferential treatment over the private media, arguing that this is because the public media are established—and paid—to protect the interest of the government of the day. She said that state-owned media pander to the whims of the executive arm of the government, but added that even privately-owned media houses tilt their reporting in favor of the political leanings of their owners.

Libel is covered under civil law, but it can also be treated as a criminal offense under provisions in a number of criminal laws at the federal and state levels. Although public officials are held to a high standard, and offended parties must prove malice and the falsity of the charges, public officials tend to receive more substantial damages than ordinary citizens when they win their cases.

According to Isikul, in contrast to the impression of panelists last year, public information is not easily accessible. Laws on the books, such as the Official Secrets Act, preclude public access to official information, while the National Assembly has still not passed the Freedom of Information Bill.

But there was a consensus that media outlets have unrestricted access to international news and news sources. The panelists also expressed doubt that any attempt to restrict access to international news would be effective, as technological developments have overtaken NAN's monopoly as the only source of foreign news in Nigeria. The panelists also agreed that the media are allowed to rebroadcast or publish foreign news agency reports.

As noted in last year's MSI, entry into the journalism profession is free, the panelists agreed, and in practice, the government imposes no licensing restrictions or special rights for journalists. Although the Nigerian Press Council Act No. 82 of 1992, as amended by Act No. 60 of 1999, imposes licensing requirements and restrictions for journalists, the provisions are not being enforced.

## OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

### Nigeria Objective Score: 2.00

The overall average score for this Objective 2, 2.00, shows a small drop from the 2.12 recorded in 2009. The panelists believed that although reporting is reasonably well-sourced, given the resources and facilities available to journalists, such reporting is nonetheless not generally fair or objective.

Highly critical of journalists' adherence to professional standards, Durodola noted that "Interviews, especially ones centered around a personality, are increasingly not conducted

professionally because of socio-economic factors. Most of the time, interviews are done in exchange for financial rewards to promote the person and swell his social status and meet the financial needs of the journalists and not for the news relevance.”

According to Okonkwo, “Journalists try, to the best of their knowledge and given the resources available to them, to cross-check their information and consult a wide variety of sources.” He added that although the profession is guided by ethical standards, they are usually not followed strictly, as most journalists have not even read the Code of Ethics for Nigerian Journalists. But, he said the NUJ takes steps to try to ensure that journalists follow recognized and accepted ethical standards, adding that NUJ also has its own Professional Code of Conduct, which it expects every member to comply with.

Juliana Ezeoke, a reporter with the weekly *Tell* magazine, expressed similar views about the challenges of complying with ethical standards. She said, “Journalists make efforts to conform to professional ethics, but are usually constrained by the realities on ground, especially economic factors.”

According to Tosin Odusola, a principal reporter and editor at the state-owned Radio Lagos, “With no guarantee for freedom of speech and information, journalists are forced into self-censorship because most times they are not sure of their facts and are afraid for their jobs and their lives.” Famuyiwa added that for those covering business or corporate beats, the need to remain within the fold is often reason enough for self-censorship, especially as there are attractive fringe benefits that journalists on such beats enjoy.

Isikul stated that although journalists cover almost all key events and issues, those in the public media practice

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self-censorship primarily for fear of losing their jobs and other kinds of sanctions.

Famuyiwa commented that financial reasons play a role in coverage, as well. Key events are not always covered, she said, as “Coverage is based on manpower, access to the event and availability of funds, equipment and resources,” adding that, “Lack of equipment means fewer opportunities for adequate coverage and broadcast.”

But Durdola argued that social networking sites and new media have brought a certain degree of independence to reporting that is unprecedented in the country, as matters that the traditional media cannot or do not cover are increasingly made available to the public through these platforms. Durodola continued, “Citizen journalists are also trying to fill in the gaps, pushing and stretching the elasticity of traditional media more than ever and challenging their status quo, offering the missing link and an informed eye witness account.” She recalled citizen Naomi Lucas’s treatment of the issue of the president’s book campaign account on Facebook, noting, “It was one of the best commentaries written on that event, yet it didn’t make a newspaper or news magazine. She had tired out trying to write for the different titles available.”

Discussing the question of pay for journalists, Ezeoke noted that journalists are often compelled to accept gratuities for reporting because salaries are sometimes not paid by their organizations—and even where they are paid, the salaries are so poor that some journalists still feel the need to accept bribes. Olusola-Obasa stressed, “Pay levels in most media organizations are grossly insufficient to discourage corruption,” but acknowledged that there are many examples of journalists who still keep to the Code of Ethics out of personal principles, despite the challenges.

Famuyiwa added, “Due to the high commercialization of media and the low wages, media professionals tend to accept payments or gifts in exchange for certain types of coverage. They may even go out of their way to create a

## 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).

program around an event, which they then cover in exchange for airtime payment. It is a widespread practice, but most prevalent among the younger journalists.”

There was consensus among the panelists that entertainment programs eclipse other news programs in the media. Isikul estimated that 70 to 80 percent of the programs in the media are centered on entertainment. Durodola blamed local and multinational companies in Nigeria for the situation, saying they are guilty of eclipsing news and information programming with entertainment programs, especially reality shows.

Last year’s MSI panelists noted that facilities and equipment for gathering, producing, and distributing news, are often not modern and efficient—and the situation tends to be much worse in the state-owned media than the privately owned stations. This year’s panelists shared the same opinions. Nnaji, of NAN, said that in the Abuja office of the agency, most reporters are given equipment, including laptops and Internet modems, to aid them in their work of gathering, processing, and disseminating news. But Durodola, who also works with state-owned media, said that only a privileged few receive modern equipment—it does not trickle down to all reporters. Others confirmed that receiving modern equipment to use is not a general or widespread practice in the media.

While some panelists feel that investigative reporting is faltering, journalists in Nigeria produce a wide variety of niche reporting, covering economics and business, politics, sports, health, and the environment—although the quality of reports is lacking. Various NGOs provide training in specialized reporting, especially regarding health and political coverage.

### OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

#### Nigeria Objective Score: 2.25

The overall average score for this Objective, 2.25, reflects only a slight decrease from last year’s score of 2.34. As in previous years, the panelists agreed that there is a plurality of public and private news sources available to citizens in print and broadcast as well as online, especially in urban areas, which accounts for the relatively high score for this objective. Ezeoke observed, “There are hundreds of newspapers and magazines, as well as broadcast media, that citizens can read or listen to and compare notes. Despite the fact that these news sources are owned by individuals with different interests, they try to reflect divergent political views, although they sometimes tilt in favor of the owners.”

Durodola noted that Nigerians have embraced the use of the Internet, both as a source of news and for the distribution of news and information. She said that Nigerians now rely heavily on social networking tools for information sharing.

However, panelists underlined the absence of community media, which leaves rural residents behind. Although there are community newspapers, they are concentrated in urban or semi-urban locations. The National Broadcasting Commission has licensed numerous campus radio stations, which it classifies as community radios, but these are again located in tertiary education institutions, mostly based in or near cities.

The panelists also agreed that access to local and international media is unrestricted, although Segun Fatuase, deputy editor of the *National Mirror*, emphasized that economic and social conditions restrict access to multiple news sources. Adetokunbo Abiola, the political editor of *Hope*, a community newspaper located in Akure, in Ondo State in southwestern Nigeria, added that people in larger cities have greater access to media sources, compared to people in villages and smaller towns, as cities have the necessary infrastructure in place—as well as literate residents with enough disposable income. Isikul contended that few people living in rural areas have Internet access; they rely mostly on the radio for information.

On the issue of whether state-owned media reflect the views of the broad political spectrum, are non-partisan, and serve the public interest, the panelists were unanimous that state-owned media are partisan and reflect mostly the views

#### 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.

of the executive and the ruling party, rather than a broad spectrum of political views.

Famuyiwa commented, however, that although the state-owned media are biased in their coverage, they nonetheless fill the gap in the provision of in-depth reporting, especially of public events and community development projects. Furthermore, they also promote educational and cultural programming more than the private media outlets.

Isikul, who works for the Bayelsa state government television station, expressed the view that a well trained professional journalist will balance reporting between government and the public. She added that the lack of professionalism and the prevalence of partisanship in employment practices had caused too much focus on government.

Durodola suggested that the performance of state-owned media varies station by station; when there are good professionals at the helm, she said, the stations tend to be more professional in their operations and less partisan in their news reporting than those being led by less professional managers. However, she disclosed that in some instances, state government spin doctors write “spotlights,” which newscasters are made to read during news programs, giving the impression that they were written independently by editorial staff and that they are the opinions of the station broadcasting the material. Sponsoring state governors pay for such spotlights, but listeners are not informed that it is not the editorial work of the station.

Odusola noted that Nigerian journalists have an array of news sources to help in their newsgathering and production activities, including news agencies such as NAN; Agence France-Presse, the French news agency; and Reuters. In addition, she said journalists also have access to other news sources such as the Internet, social networking sites like Facebook, press releases and news coverage by reporters.

Nnaji, who reports for the government-owned NAN, said that although the orientation of NAN is favor of the government, the agency nonetheless caters to the specific demands of its clients. Panelists also noted that local news agency reports are not always acknowledged and credited when media organizations use their reports. Nnaji gave various examples of instances in which newspapers published, virtually verbatim but without giving credit, news reports that she wrote for NAN.

Panelists disagreed over whether Nigerian media organizations are able to afford the cost of subscription for the services of news agencies. According to Famuyiwa, because most media outlets cannot afford the services of local or international news agencies, they download materials online free of charge without citing the sources.

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But Olusola-Obasa insists that most media outlets can afford to pay the subscription fees charged by international news agencies. Such services, she said, have become imperative, because “the world has become a global village—leaving no serious media manager with any choice but to provide a variety of news items from around the world.” The panelists agreed, though, that independent broadcast media largely produce their own news programs.

Regarding the transparency of media ownership, Ezeoke said the inability of citizens to figure out the powers behind some of the media organizations makes it difficult for them to understand the difference between content published under the influence of the owner and material published in the public interest. Fatuase said media ownership is still largely shrouded in secrecy; Okonkwo agreed, claiming that most media owners hide their identities. Falobi also insisted that media ownership is not transparent.

In terms of the media’s efforts to cover issues of social importance, Falobi said that the media do not adequately cover a range of social interests including gender issues, children, religion, etc. Instead, there is a lot of focus on politics and business.

#### **OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

### **Nigeria Objective Score: 2.14**

The overall average score for this Objective is 2.14, representing an increase from the score of 2.02 in 2009. The panelists agreed that media outlets generally operate as profit-generating businesses, but they expressed concern about the levels of competence and professionalism in their management.

According to Olayinka Oyegbile, an editor at *NEXT*, independent media are not necessarily well managed



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businesses that allow editorial independence. He recalled instances when the owners or publishers of newspapers had stopped the publication of certain stories when they jeopardized their business interests. Odusola added that the fact that many media outlets are often unable to pay workers' salaries points to poor management. According to Fatuase, the independent media outlets are not well-managed businesses and have no editorial independence because they always bow to the whims of the owners, who frequently interfere in their operations.

Backing this impression, Famuyiwa noted that the accounting and finance practices of some of the media outlets fall short of international standards, adding that even where dedicated professionals are hired to manage key areas, the practice of making business decisions on the basis of personal interests is fairly ingrained—and few appear to follow business plans. But Falobi emphasized that both state-owned and privately owned media outlets still fail to appoint enough trained professionals in key accounting, marketing, and human resources positions. Nevertheless, Famuyiwa argued that those media outlets owned by media professionals stand out

#### 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.

as more efficient and professional businesses that are able to retain staff.

Ezeoke added that independent media managers often fail to invest in their reporters, seeing them as expendable rather than assets. In other cases, she said, managers might be well intentioned, but they fail to manage their organizations well because of a lack of adequate funding.

In general, the panelists feel that the media organizations do not earn revenue from a broad enough pool of sources. They said there are very few revenue streams available to them: primarily, advertising, sponsorship and grants, awards, sales for the print media, and partnerships for the broadcast medium. Government subsidies and grants sustain the state-owned media, although there have been reports of plans to make state-owned media generate their own revenue to sustain their operations.

Odusola said some of the revenue sources of the media outlets, such as advertisers, create ethical problems for them. Oyebgile explained that media outlets that obtain advertising patronage from a government or a corporation lean toward self-censorship, for fear of losing their funding. In general, the panelists also agreed that all media organizations are susceptible to editorial influence by advertisers and sponsors, while state-owned media are significantly less independent, as they receive 100 percent of their funding from the government.

Famuyiwa said advertising is quite developed and a number of advertising campaigns are well researched and professionally produced. However, she noted, the use of agencies undercuts the income to media outlets, especially as the commission to advertising agencies was recently increased to 20 percent, excluding the VAT that is deducted on cash payments. She also shared her view that private media professionals are not very skilled in exploiting the potential of advertising to generate revenues in ethical and professional ways.

There was consensus among the panelists that private media outlets do not receive government subsidies. But according to Famuyiwa, although government subsidies are not disbursed to the private media, "Private media have been known to receive sponsorship through government funds for pro-government productions or broadcasts." She added that a number of private media outlets survive on government funding in this way, especially during political campaigns by public office holders seeking re-election.

Panelists agreed that there are communications research companies operating in the country that conduct media research and audience ratings, but added that their research is widely considered unreliable, tainted by payments from

stakeholders. They also agreed that there some media houses that conduct in-house audience research, but the results are not consistently put to good use.

Famuyiwa specifically expressed reservations about the nature of market research by media outlets, saying it is not done in any tenable way. She explained that media outlets use informal research, mostly phone surveys, to rate individual programs, adding, "I am not aware of any media outlet that commissioned research for the purpose of determining viewership or readership."

## OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

### Nigeria Objective Score: 2.70

Most of the panelists feel that professional bodies represent various sectors of the media adequately, while NGOs working in the areas of media development, media assistance, and freedom of expression provide valuable and substantial support and assistance to the media.

Famuyiwa noted that broadcasters and publishers associations exist and support members' interests. These organizations lobby government on behalf of their members and advocate for media independence. For example, the Newspaper Proprietors' Association of Nigeria in the past challenged the constitutionality of a law imposing a licensing regime on journalists. Other trade organizations include the Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria, and the Independent Broadcasters Association of Nigeria.

As for professional associations, historically, MSI panelists have disagreed over their commitment to protecting the rights of journalists. This year, Ezeoke said that although the

#### 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.

*Famuyiwa commented, "Distribution is still largely done on foot, with vendors selling on the streets, at kiosks, and from house to house. The days of subscriptions and house-to-house drop by bikers or drivers are yet to come for newspapers."*

influence of trade unions is still very limited in the media, professional associations such as NUJ help protect journalists' rights. She noted that on many occasions, NUJ stepped up to criticize the maltreatment of journalists by politicians who felt threatened by their reporting. In last year's MSI, however, one panelist likened NUJ to a "toothless bulldog." In addition to the NUJ, other bodies representing media professionals and media workers are the Radio, Television, and Theatre Workers Union, the Nigerian Guild of Editors, and the National Union of Printing, Publishing, and Paper Products Workers. While theoretically independent unions and associations, in practice they have proved susceptible to the influence of federal and state governments, as noted in last year's MSI. They often rely on governments for cash and gifts to cover everything from operating costs to building and equipping press centers.

According to Famuyiwa, there are a number of active, locally managed NGOs working in cooperation with the media sector to support freedom of speech and media independence. Such organizations include Media Rights Agenda, the International Press Centre, and the Centre for Free Speech. They play a media watchdog role, provide legal assistance to journalists, and offer training and other capacity-building activities. Famuyiwa added, though, that such NGOs are still relatively few, given the number of media outlets in the country. Furthermore, she said, they could be more effective in their advocacy if they formed long-term partnerships, rather than their current tendency to team up for one-off partnerships around specific activities. They also tend to focus on the cities, where media houses are located.

Regardless of the NGOs' shortcomings, the panelists noted that quite a lot of journalists owe their in-service training to local and international NGOs, citing popular training programs that include political and health reporting, among other areas.

Durodola noted the shakiness of continuity and succession in the media, as young and aspiring journalism graduates are unskilled to fit into the industry. Their training curriculum is too theoretical, in her view—despite assertions by panelists in last year's MSI that journalism training institutions are increasingly using hands-on methodology, encouraging more

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newsroom internships, and taking advantage of the growing number of campus radio stations to give their students practical training in various aspects of running radio stations or producing campus newspapers or journals. Nevertheless, Durodola stressed the need for support organizations to fill the skills gap, as the journalism departments appear to be “dumping sites” for everyone who failed to secure admission to study other courses; journalism generally attracts below-average students, she said.

As last year’s MSI reported, opportunities for short-term, in-service training of journalists exist, but for the most part journalists must pay for their own training. Media managers have shown a lack of receptiveness to such opportunities, therefore depriving journalists of these chances to grow. There are some in-house training programs for journalists.

Famuyiwa said although printing firms are sufficient, particularly in the southwestern part of the country where

most of them are located, they are not efficient enough to support the media industry. Also, while channels of media distribution are generally in private hands, apolitical, and unrestricted, the system to distribute newspapers in the country is fairly primitive. Famuyiwa commented, “Distribution is still largely done on foot, with vendors selling on the streets, at kiosks, and from house to house. The days of subscriptions and house-to-house drop by bikers or drivers are yet to come for newspapers.”

Oyegbile also pointed out other challenges to the media industry surrounding the distribution of newspapers. He said although distribution networks are in private hands, and therefore not really subjected to political control, the distributors do not “remit all sales money to the company, complicating life for the publishers, because they do not receive the cash they need to run the business on time.” Durodola also underscored the challenges posed to broadcasting by the irregular power supply in the country: “Power generation is an albatross in broadcast operations in Nigeria; a lot of broadcast stations are struggling to survive as a result.”

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## List of Panel Participants

**Enato Isukul**, news manager, Bayelsa State Television, Yenogoa

**Adetokunbo Abiola**, reporter, *Hope*, Akure

**Edith Nnaji**, reporter, News Agency of Nigeria, Abuja

**Tunde Akanni**, lecturer, Department of Journalism, Lagos State University, Lagos

**Funmi Falobi**, reporter, *Daily Independent*, Lagos

**Olayinka Oyegbile**, editor, *NEXT*, Lagos

**Tosin Odusola**, principal reporter, Radio Lagos; editor, Eko FM, Lagos

**Chuks Nwanne**, reporter, *The Guardian*, Lagos

**Segun Fatuase**, deputy editor, *National Mirror*, Lagos

**Yewande Iwuoha**, head of news department, RayPower FM radio, Lagos

**Omolola Anne Famuyiwa**, editor-in-chief, *Willows Magazine*, Lagos

**Bosedede Olusola-Obasa**, correspondent, *The Saturday Punch*, Lagos

**Juliana Ezeoke**, reporter, *Tell Magazine*, Lagos

**Adolphus Okonkwo**, news editor, Voice of Nigeria radio, Lagos

**Funke Treasure Durodola**, head of presentations, Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, Lagos

## Moderator and Author

**Edetaen Ojo**, executive director, Media Rights Agenda, Lagos