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GUINEA

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Since the election of Alpha Condé as president in 2010, Guinea has been moving toward holding legislative elections. Yet this process comes as the country's social fabric has been greatly strained by ethnic tensions over the presidential election. Political dialogue between the government and the opposition parties has deadlocked in the absence of a consensus on restructuring the National Independent Electoral Commission and on the proper management of the voter rolls, which the opposition has set as the necessary preconditions for an election.

When it emerges from this transitional period, the government will still face economic challenges related to harnessing the country's natural-resource wealth for the benefit of the average citizen. The percentage of people living under the poverty threshold rose from 49.1 percent in 2003 to 55.2 percent in 2012. The government is still far from meeting the demand for basic social services, such as electricity and water, and inflation is soaring. A return of internal insecurity in the form of armed attacks on private homes and businesses is hardly reassuring for foreign investors. Democratic freedoms have also been snatched away, with a countrywide ban on opposition-organized events.

Relative to the 2010 MSI, Guinea's media have become slightly less sustainable. The legal environment has shown modest improvement, with new legal guarantees for journalists' freedom of expression. A code of conduct for media coverage of elections has also been introduced. The National Transitional Council initiated a law that now requires state officials to satisfy media outlets' requests for information. In practice, however, many of these new laws have not yet been enforced. There have been fewer incidents of violence recorded against journalists, though isolated cases are reported. The National Communication Council (CNC) still requires reform.

The Guinean media landscape has diversified somewhat, with the advent of new media outlets, particularly in radio, where there has been an increase in the number of private and community stations. Conditions for obtaining licenses have been eased. New radio stations offer more diverse choice and are more responsive to citizens' interests. However, the weakness of the independent news sector, with no independent news agency and plagiarism concerns, limits this positive attribute.

Professional standards declined slightly. Despite the efforts made by the state, supported by various partners, graduates of journalism colleges are still far from satisfying the requirements of the job market due to poor preparation and instruction, and their flaws play out in the workplace. Salaries for media workers remain low, and facilities and infrastructure are obsolete for the state media in particular.

Business management remains a drag on media sustainability, with its low score reflecting poor management, standards, and overall economic limitations. This has a serious direct impact on the media's profitability, and in the long term, on their viability.

GUINEA AT A GLANCE

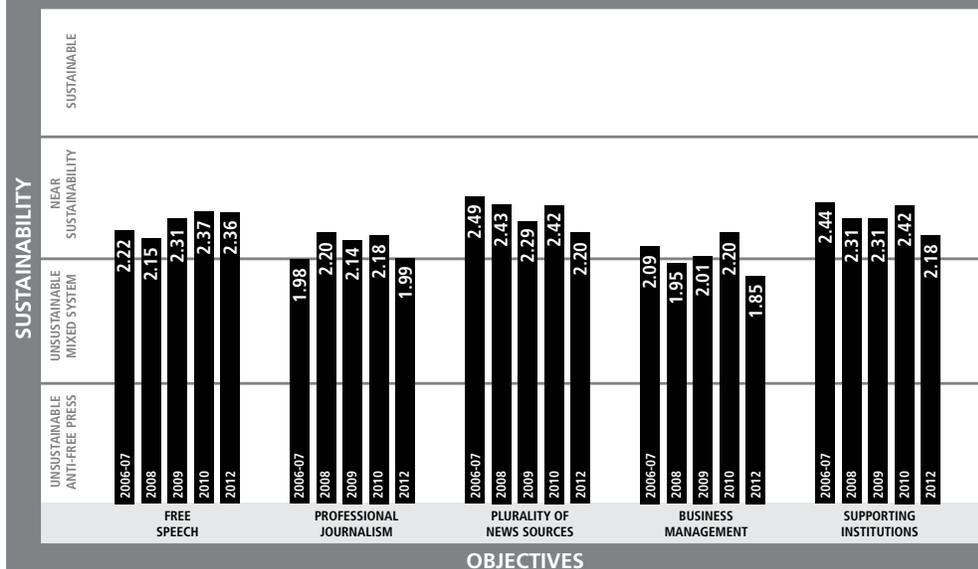
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 11,176,026 (2012 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Conakry
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Peuhl 40%, Malinke 30%, Soussou 20%, smaller ethnic groups 10% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Muslim 85%, Christian 8%, indigenous beliefs 7% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages:** French (official); each ethnic group has its own language (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2011-Atlas):** \$4.525 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2012)
- > **GNI per capita (2011-PPP):** \$1,050 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2012)
- > **Literacy rate:** 34% (male 47.2%, female 22.8 %) (2012 est., *ELEP*)
- > **President or top authority:** General Alpha Conde, president (since December 21, 2010)

MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** Print: 800 titles (including 30 private weeklies which appear more or less regularly and have circulations of between 1,000 and 10,000); Radio Stations: 56, including 2 public channels, 18 community radio stations and 32 private radio stations; Television Stations: 2 public channels, 3 private channels; Online news sites: 43
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** Top ten by circulation: *Le Lynx, la lance, l'Indépendant, la république, l'observateur, Le diplomate, le populaire, le démocrate, le defi et l'humanité.*
- > **Broadcast ratings:** Top seven radio stations: Espace FM, Renaissance FM, Nostalgie, Soleil FM, Évasion FM, Sabary FM, radiodiffusion nationale
- > **News agencies:** Guinean Press Agency (state-owned)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** N/A
- > **Internet usage:** 95,000 (2009 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX GUINEA



Unstable, 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.

Unstable 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

Guinea Objective Score: 2.36

While legal protections for freedom of the press and of speech improved in the aftermath of the 2010 power struggle, they remain largely unenforced. Guinean Radio and Television and the *Horoya* newspaper remain in the service of the state authorities, not the public.

The National Transitional Council crafted or reconfirmed four laws in conformity with international human-rights standards in 2010, including the new constitution, the law on freedom of the press, the law establishing the High Communications Authority (HAC), and the 2005 decree on the creation and operation of private radio and television stations in Guinea. All four laws guarantee freedom of speech.

The information law establishes a right to information for media professionals and lifts many other constraints, while the 2012 reform requires officials to provide journalists with such access.

Panelist Chaickou Baldé, of the Guinean Human Rights Organization in Conakry, reported, "People's right to information is guaranteed, yes, but people still encounter enormous difficulty and even complete stonewalling in trying to get it. Journalists are all quite familiar with that."

Some panelists observed that freedom of speech at the community level was influenced by social stratification. As

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.

Describing that case, Cissé said, "The gendarme's vicious words against our colleague let us get a glimpse of their hatred for journalists in the private media, who they called crooks in the pay of the opposition."

Mohamed Camara, an independent legal expert in Conakry, put it, "Social norms on occasion act as a brake on this impetus, because of the weight of social pressures."

In exceptional circumstances, such as during the attack on the residence of the head of state in July 2011, the CNC banned private radio stations from airing political and live talk programs. After meeting resistance from the Guinean Union of Free Radio and Television Broadcasters (URTELGUI), human-rights organizations, and the international community, the CNC reversed its decision. This victory influenced Guinea's scores for both the freedom-of-speech and institutional-support objectives.

Even though the judicial authorities respect the confidentiality of sources, it was observed that in some cases they were subject to influence from the executive on press-freedom issues.

The granting of licenses to radio and television stations requires the submission of a draft outlining how the station would be established, and that draft must meet technical specifications. Station operators must prepare their technical specifications documents and submit them to the CNC, which examines them and decides whether the Ministry of Communication should issue a license. The Post and Telecommunications Regulation Authority (ARPT) of the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications and New Information Technologies then allocates the approved media outlet a frequency. How long these applications take depends, according to the panelists, on applicants' willingness to pay and their political clout.

Licensing is controlled by the CNC and the Ministry of Communication. Two commissions from these institutions that were formed to assess applications are made up of advisors at the CNC and civil servants selected for their skills at the ministry. They are nominally independent politically, though they may act in their own interests. Some of them are quick to demand money from applicants or sell their services in putting applications together.

Frequency allocation requires a request from the private media outlet that is applying for one. In the event of

“Officials are afraid to talk to the press without prior authorization from the hierarchy, on penalty of losing their jobs,” Cissé observed. “Meanwhile, ministers who will agree to answer questions from the private media are rare birds indeed.”

a refusal, there is no provision for the rejected outlet to challenge the decision. The decree on private media prohibited political parties and religious denominations from running broadcast stations.

According to the Ministry of Communication, to date 52 radio stations and six television stations have been approved in Guinea.

Media outlets that have not been allocated a frequency are not authorized to broadcast. That arrangement—far from being influenced by politics—makes for better management of the available bandwidth and avoids the chaos that total saturation of the airwaves would cause.

All media outlets and professional associations were registered with the CNC, which offered them advantages, such as being able to benefit from annual state subsidies. For the printed press in general, the name of the outlet must be registered with the Court of First Instance.

Even though many panelists found this process to be a transparent one, Mamady Yaya Cissé, a professor at the Institute of Information and Communication Sciences in Kountia, a suburb of Conakry, pointed to economic constraints. “There are restrictions, because if you are a commercial radio station in Guinea, and if you do not have 100 million Guinean francs (\$14,000), you cannot get a frequency. There are applications that are rejected because the applicants have not handed over the money.”

The legal system requires applicants to comply with the conditions for establishing themselves and managing programming, and those conditions are stringently applied. Authorization to create a broadcasting outlet requires a flat-rate fee of GNF 15,000,000 (\$2,100), which carries with it the right to have a frequency allocated. Some private radio entrepreneurs considered this exorbitant. Foreign radio and television channels that want to set up shop in Guinea sign an establishment agreement with the Ministry of Communication. The amount of the annual fee for a frequency allocation for radio and television broadcasting is GNF 25,000,000 (\$3,500) for commercial radio stations, GNF 20,000,000 (\$2,800) for community radio stations, GNF

50,000,000 (\$7,000) for commercial television stations, and GNF 30,000,000 (\$4,200) for community television stations. As mentioned above, in practice, these costs (including bribes to move the process along) are much higher.

In cases where fees for previous years were not paid, ARPT has ordered the radio stations concerned to shut down. ARPT has withdrawn the frequency allocations of private radio stations, such as Nostalgie, Djigui, and Gangan. This led URTELGUI to ask ARPT to cut the fees to make it easier for free radio and television broadcasters to pay.

The panelists noted that privately owned newspapers are not subject to any restrictions and that anyone could set up a newspaper without enormous “unofficial” costs. In addition, the print media benefit from a tax exemption on imported materials, though it was stressed that the exemption had no impact on their editorial independence.

The panel believes crimes against, and intimidation of, journalists and media outlets have become rarer since 2010. Nevertheless, a few isolated cases have been seen. The headquarters of the private weekly *Le Défi Plus* were vandalized by unknown assailants. The headquarters of *l’Indépendant-Le Démocrate* were subjected to a heavy-handed raid by the security forces, who said they had a warrant to arrest the director of the newspaper or his deputies. Reporter Kounkou Mara, of the Lynx-Lance group, was the victim of physical and verbal aggression from government militia deployed at the Central Bank. Describing that case, Cissé said, “The gendarme’s vicious words against our colleague let us get a glimpse of their hatred for journalists in the private media, who they called crooks in the pay of the opposition. There has been no prosecution raised against the gendarme, and the problem has been resolved out of court between the parties.”

Such acts, which more often victimize newspaper reporters, have been condemned by media organizations and the CNC. The Guinean Human Rights Organization had often lobbied for and spoken in defense of journalists who have been victims of violence and intimidation.

The state media in Guinea are heavily politicized, and their employees are public officials. Leaders of public news organizations are appointed not for their competence, but for their willingness to defend the ruling class and be influenced by superiors. This has sidelined professional journalists in favor of supporters of people in power, which has in turn prevented equal access to the state media, particularly for political opposition groups and their supporters. In 2011, for example, three public-television news presenters were thanked nicely and then reassigned to jobs

for which they were not qualified, the reasons for which remained unclear.

The panel noted also that the public media are more inclined to report information coming from the government than to cover the doings of the opposition. "The journalists who work there and their bosses have practically no independence at all," said panelist Mata Afiwa, of Soleil FM private radio. "State programming and newspapers are sufficient proof that it is the authorities who are in control." That attitude led the CNC to demand that the public media cover opposition meetings, which they have since done only sporadically.

From the point of view of coverage of political events (movements of the head of state, special events), public media coverage was often preferred. Apart from those cases, as the panel noted, most private media outlets had accreditation to cover a range of events.

Libel law gives the victim the right to complain to the media outlet involved and receive a reply. The burden of proof rests with the complainant. The reply must be published or broadcast within the week following the alleged defamation. If the accused organization refuses to reply, the matter goes to court for a ruling. If the information is found to be true, and therefore not libelous, court proceedings are immediately halted.

For online media, there are four categories of sites: professional, news, blogs, and opinion. The last are where alleged instances of defamation are most often found. For the moment, such sites are not subject to legal controls.

The National Transitional Council passed a new law that makes it mandatory to broadcast public information and provide members of the press with access to information. But the panelists noted that despite that provision, the Guinean government hardly communicates anything. There are no communications bureaus or informational websites attached to any ministries. The rare pieces of information that filter down to the public come in the form of unattributed rumors.

"Officials are afraid to talk to the press without prior authorization from the hierarchy, on penalty of losing their jobs," Cissé observed. "Meanwhile, ministers who will agree to answer questions from the private media are rare birds indeed. They prefer to go onto the public media to defend themselves. As a consequence, the Internet is becoming the sole source of news for the Guinean media, as there is not a single outlet among them that subscribes to a Guinean or a foreign press agency."

Ismail Kabiné Camara, of the tamtamguinee.com news website based in Conakry, added, "Getting hold of official information and/or documents concerning certain specific

sectors, such as mining, is a devil of a job." Though access to information is legally required, there are some limits. The High Communication Authority Act restricts information relating to internal and external state security, confidentiality of investigations in legal proceedings, or the protection of the honor and dignity of the human person.

Generally speaking, the government was more inclined to provide information to the state media than to the private media. Gaining access was a real ordeal for journalists in the independent press, whether print, radio, or television.

Soleil FM's Afiwa noted, "Those in charge of public service categorically refuse to provide public information to journalists in the private media," though that situation is frequently condemned by those media. Other panelists believed gaining access to public information depended on the journalist's degree of professionalism, given that some private media workers did easily obtain documents from state officials.

State and private media outlets may use local and international information as they see fit. Most radio and television outlets and newspapers use information from news websites in their reports.

The provisions of the media code of ethics and professional practice notwithstanding, some outlets do commit breaches. "There are very few newspapers with subscriptions to the international press agencies," Kabiné Camara said. "Unfortunately, news is broadcast with the source not given. It is becoming real plagiarism."

Professional journalists are defined in law as "any person with a diploma from a state-recognized school of journalism, whose principal, regular, and remunerated activity is to gather, process, and disseminate information." The law categorizes any professional journalist not attached to a press enterprise as a freelancer and considers press correspondents working within Guinea or abroad to be journalists if they receive salaries. The CNC issues professional cards only to people who meet its conditions.

All that said, in practice the rule is not observed. Cissé summarized the situation: "The essential thing is to belong to a media outlet and work for it. Everyone is authorized to practice the profession, but at the same time the notion of bloggers and citizen journalists is still too new to be evaluated." Entry to the profession is free and unrestricted, as panel moderator Oumou Khairy Cherif, of the Pan-African Association of Professional Women in Communications, pointed out, "In the printed press, anyone at all can be a journalist. All you need to know how to do is write on a piece of paper."

Kabiné Camara captured the professional proclivities of many Guinean journalists. “They get up in the morning saying that they are off to do some reportage today. So they get in the guy’s face and fail to ask the right questions. Not only that, the subjectivity in what journalists write is overwhelming.”

Those recognized as journalists have professional cards and accreditation cards issued by the government. Authorizations were sometimes issued to journalists to cover activities that fell within the area of state sovereignty. The government does not interfere either in entry into higher-education programs, which admit by competitive examination under a quota system, or in the recruitment of entry-level journalists by media outlets.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM
Guinea Objective Score: 1.99

Guinea’s journalists performed well in terms of coverage of key events and issues, principally due to their efforts to cover all events in the country and the limited success of the government in preventing them from doing so. Also, the private media can freely tackle issues that the public media ignore. Pay levels remained poor, hampering the development of quality journalism.

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).

Despite the best efforts of chief editors and training courses on the code of ethics and professional practice given by the NGO Search for Common Ground, few journalists spared the time to check information before reporting it. Kabiné Camara captured the professional proclivities of many Guinean journalists. “They get up in the morning saying that they are off to do some reportage today. So they get in the guy’s face and fail to ask the right questions. Not only that, the subjectivity in what journalists write is overwhelming.”

Such tactics sometimes cause problems for those in charge of media outlets, as they can offend sources. Cissé explained, “When there is a street demo organized by the opposition parties against the government, journalists handle the news as if they had been standing right next to it on the sidewalk. When the two parties hurl accusations at other, of coming down on the demonstrators on the opposition side and of provocation on the government side, it is very difficult for journalists to check what the reality was. You cannot find anyone to speak about it properly, as they prefer to make statements on the state media and spurn having both sides debate with each other in the media.”

Alpha Abdoulaye Diallo, of the Guinean Association of Independent Press Publishers in Conakry, shared this sentiment: “The question of the quality of the work is the one that is actually being asked whenever we stress the obligation to vary our sources and take into account what the people involved in a scandal are saying, for example.”

Professionalism in seeking out information and interviewing specialists was thin on the ground at several media outlets. The panel noted growing specialization among journalists in terms of subject matter, but a lack of understanding of basic standards was the norm.

Regarding indicator 2, a code of ethical conduct and professional practice was drawn up in 1991 by the Association of Guinean Journalists and updated in 2003 by the Guinean Observatory of Media Ethics and Professional Practice. The code stressed respect for the public right to information, truthful reporting of facts, and practice of the profession with dignity. However, the code, which drew its inspiration from the relevant international texts, was more often honored in the breach than in the observance.

Amara Camara, editor-in-chief of Guinean National Radio, observed, “The content of the code is right now being trampled underfoot by the vast majority of practicing journalists. This is because of several factors, such as the poor level of training among journalists, the fact that the code has never been properly promoted or inculcated, greed.”

The panel noted that the Guinean media had designed a code of good conduct for the transition leading up to the

presidential elections. The code, which was initiated by Search for Common Ground and ratified by representatives of the media outlets, was intended to help maintain peace and social stability. It also called on the authorities and political parties to create favorable conditions for media workers to practice their profession during the campaign. Some breaches of the code were frequent, particularly false information, defamation, invasion of privacy through interactive programming, failure to distinguish comment from fact, and illicit payments.

Reporters often hawk their services to whoever has the fattest wallet, and coverage is conditional, particularly in radio and television, on the giving of gifts to the reporter. That said, at most media outlets a clear distinction was drawn between news and advertorials, although that did not prevent some journalists from slipping advertorial material into their reports.

Plagiarism is also a common practice, particularly at private radio stations and newspapers, which essentially reproduce articles produced by the online press and foreign radio stations in their entirety, without attribution.

Self-censorship is an old, hard habit that still persists in the state media, even though authorities are interfering less in the way the information itself is handled. However, as Amara Camara noted, "The excessive politicization of the Guinean media points to a strong likelihood that the bosses of the public and private press will take up positions." Cherif said she believed "some journalists protecting their own economic and political interests" was the reason the practice continued. Cissé saw a number of reasons: "Guinean journalists in the public services are under obligation to self-censor so as not to get fired. That is why it is rare to see such journalists getting interested in any of the country's issues that can be called 'sensitive.'" In the state media, such as radio and television, those in charge often felt obliged to censor reporters.

The panelists observed that since the airwaves were liberalized in 2006, and particularly with the advent of private radio stations, stations have covered all events without restrictions. That said, during political events reporters are harassed by party "heavies," and some have had their equipment taken.

For some years, senior management of radio and television media had banned reporting on what were deemed issues of "sovereignty," which, in practice, meant conflicts that could threaten stability in the state. These practices have been phased out somewhat, as evidenced by the uproar against the ban on covering the assassination attempt against the president.

And Cissé noted, "In most cases, Guinean journalists have other gainful employment outside the profession that enables them to meet other needs." The panelists estimated that two-thirds of Guinean journalists have no salary or contract.

The private media, both print and broadcast, are free to report on issues of national and international security. Such reporting is also gaining more tolerance in the state media.

The panel found it praiseworthy that the urban media were dwelling on political and social issues. Facely Condé, a journalist at Kankan regional rural radio, noted that specialists are called upon to assist in covering certain topics. "There are situations in which we call in specialists to tell what they know about a subject they are well on top of. For example, right now there are lots of cases of cholera in the country. We call on specialists who explain what the causes are, how it is transmitted, and what you have to do to avoid getting it."

The panelists noted that the private media, working in synergy, covered the most recent presidential elections through a program entitled "Democracy Radio" that included live reportage, an election-night program, and debates between party leaders.

The economic environment is hardly conducive to the sound practice of journalism. Salaries are far from meeting the needs of people who work in the media. Camara explained, "All we have still are bonuses, but no salaries in the proper sense of the word. This is because at almost all press organs there are no duly signed contracts. There is also no collective agreement and no union of journalists to defend their interests better."

In some editorial offices, those in charge leave it up to reporters—who generally are unpaid—to cover events that would allow them to earn their daily bread. This obliges some reporters to work for several media outlets. And Cissé noted, "In most cases, Guinean journalists have other gainful employment outside the profession that enables them to meet other needs." The panelists estimated that two-thirds of Guinean journalists have no salary or contract.

Employee salary levels in the private media present a disparate picture. At a private radio station, an editor-in-chief might receive a monthly salary of between GNF 300,000 and GNF 800,000 (\$42 and \$112), but there are also trainees who

started out at GNF 300,000. Experience and seniority are not taken into account. Camara said, "You can find trainees with salaries that are higher than the editor-in-chief's. It depends on how the boss sees you."

Bad pay leaves journalists open to corruption. Afiwa confirmed this: "Journalists do not often have good salaries. Some do not even have any. They are therefore open to corruption and to bribery, in particular. The result is that there are many instances of partisan articles and programming that does not comply with any journalistic standards at all. The situation is unlikely to change anytime soon because the associations of media professionals we have in Guinea are doing nothing to organize the profession."

Journalists in the state media are on the Guinean public-service salary scale and are therefore better paid than their colleagues in the private media. The basic salary for a beginner is between GNF 300,000 and GNF 500,000 (\$42 and \$70), and for an experienced journalist it is between GNF 700,000 and GNF 1,000,000 (\$98 and \$140). Still, those salaries are relatively low, compared with pay in the education sector, for example.

In the private media, low salaries could induce people who are seeking to enter the profession to opt for more lucrative work in another sector instead.

Airtime varies depending on the type of radio station. In urban areas, such as Conakry, the radio stations broadcast from 6 am to midnight, with the exception of radio stations such as Espace, Nostalgie, Sabary, Djigui, national radio, and foreign channels. National television airs from 9 am to midnight. The rural radio stations around the interior of the country generally broadcast for nine hours a day.

In general, entertainment programming had the predominant share of the schedule. Cissé explained: "The Guinean media are much more tempted to put on entertainment programming because they do not have the means to produce news and educational programs. Generally, Guinean journalists do not go to the news; they prefer to wait in the editorial office, and requests for reportage have to come and find them there."

Baldé agreed: "You have to shake your head at the large number of musical variety programs that have the upper hand over thorough and documented reportage, debate programs, surveys, and other investigative work that are the cornerstones of democracy and good governance."

A careful consideration of the programming schedules of Guinean radio stations by the panel showed that about 60 percent of programming was dedicated to informational

programs, 30 percent to entertainment, and 10 percent to news.

Afiwa noted that at the private radio stations, more journalists are diversifying their coverage, producing programs on health, the environment, the economy, and education.

Regarding indicator 7, the state of equipment (particularly in the state media), was worrying. At the Koloma National Television station, only five of eight cameras and one of the station's four VTR editing rooms were in working order. The lack of training among the technical staff was also noted.

At National Radio, there were regular breakdowns in the program production studios. At the time of the panel discussion, the station's two-kilowatt transmitter was putting out less than 500 watts.

Even though satellite has been available for several years, the panel noted that the state media's coverage of the country (radio and television, in particular) fell far short of people's expectations. This was also the case for the rural radio stations, whose equipment is becoming more and more obsolete, even before the regular transmitter breakdowns are taken into account.

Most Guinean broadcast media were in transition between analog and digital. That state of affairs prompted Camara to remark, "The state media often film and record using analog equipment, whereas the broadcasting facilities are digital. That has repercussions in the form of poor sound or picture quality on public radio and television."

The national newspaper *Horoya* has dropped down from daily to weekly publication because its equipment is so out-of-date.

In contrast with the state media, private radio and television stations have relatively modern and well-maintained equipment. That said, panelist Alpha Ousmane Souaré, of private radio station Horizon, listed their equipment problems. "We cannot, for example, make a pre-recorded debate program, because there is almost never a studio B to make it in. You can't have a debate with a dictaphone, never mind a high-quality debate. Then there is a lack of logistical and communication resources—no vehicles, sometimes no way to recharge to be able to make telephone calls. This prevents us from doing good work."

Few Guinean media outlets have Internet connections. To get around this, quite a few journalists use the facilities at the Press House to connect to the Internet.

Over the past few years, the phenomenon of specialist news coverage in print and radio has become common. Reporters

are forming networks to promote coverage of specific topics. These included organizations for health, education, the economy, corruption, the environment, and mining coverage.

Investigative journalism is rare. In the press, the satirical newspaper *Le Lynx*, and *l'Indépendant*, *Le Populaire*, and *l'Observateur*, were exceptions, delivering relatively high-quality investigations to their readerships. Among the private radio stations, Djigui, Espace, Sabary, and Soleil have performed some investigative reporting on issues of national interest.

The panel noted that investigations of a number of thorny issues for the government, which had been a regular thing under the previous regime, have disappeared from the state media.

The most popular subjects of investigative reporting were political issues, national security, and social demands in relation to electoral promises (water and electricity supply, improved access to areas of production, improvement of health and education service provision, urban transport, the cost of living, and so on).

In general, listeners and readers consider what investigative journalism there is to be satisfactory. However, a number of factors militate against the production of high-quality investigative pieces. Camara pointed to bad faith and mediocre training in the profession. Nevertheless, he said, "We must recognize that there is a category of professional, respectable journalists, albeit one that is small in numbers, who try very hard to abide by the rules that govern the journalism profession."

Cherif commented, "There is very little deep-digging reportage; journalists do not often go into problems in depth. There is more comment to be found than solid, well-argued facts." There are few people specializing in investigative reporting and few resources to carry it out. In addition, various interest groups limited access to information.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

Guinea Objective Score: 2.20

Plurality of news sources declined slightly from the previous study, partly due to the failures of the private sector to provide improving alternatives to the state broadcaster. Coverage of events on a variety of levels and access to the media were comparatively strong areas. The state media's function in the interest of the government and the lack of an independent press agency were weaker factors.

"Distributing news using cellphones and other social networks is a whole new deal in the media landscape in Guinea," Cissé said. "They are used much more by the political parties to spread their propaganda."

Guinea has advanced in terms of its plurality of information sources. There are two public radio stations, two public television channels, one national newspaper, one national press agency, 23 rural radio channels, three private television channels, 33 functional radio stations, 28 regularly published private newspaper titles, and 43 media websites. In addition, two foreign radio networks (the RFI and the BBC) offer programs in Guinea, while Voice of America programming is relayed by the radio stations Gangan, Sabary, Freedom FM Conakry, and Kankan Milo.

The state media reflect the government's point of view, while the private media reflect a wider range. The panel noted that the opinions of the political parties were covered much more by the private media than the state media, despite repeated appeals by the CNC to Guinean Radio and Television to report on opposition events and open up airtime across the political spectrum.

According to the panel, citizens appreciate the diversity of news sources and judge that the programs offered by the radio and television media were in keeping with their

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.

concerns. Most of the urban population (particularly in the capital) place much more faith in the private media, whereas the rural population gravitates toward their local, state-controlled radio stations. Interactive programs on the private radio stations allow listeners to call in to express their views.

The use of cellphones and social networking as means of delivering news is still rare. "Distributing news using cellphones and other social networks is a whole new deal in the media landscape in Guinea," Cissé said. "They are used much more by the political parties to spread their propaganda."

News sources are increasingly diversifying thanks to new information technologies, essentially the Internet. Camara warned, however, "Objectivity and reliability still leave something to be desired because of falsification and manipulation."

Regarding indicator 2, the authorities imposed no restrictions to citizens' access to domestic or international media. All news outlets enjoy a certain degree of independence in gathering, handling, and disseminating local, national, and international news.

Citizens who can afford it can buy a range of international newspapers at newsstands or subscribe to cable companies, but the least well-off Guineans lack access to these news sources. Listening to the foreign radio stations accredited in Guinea is free and easily accessible on FM in Conakry and the country's regional capitals.

Cybercafés exist, though they are affected by the rolling power cuts in most towns, and customers can access domestic and foreign news. There is no official pressure to discourage the proprietors or users of cybercafés.

In general, people living in the chief towns in the prefectures and in the regional capitals had relative advantages in terms of media access. In smaller towns and districts, people listen more to the rural radio stations. Illiteracy is a major obstacle to newspaper readership.

Regarding indicator 3, the state media, particularly national radio and television, are profoundly partisan in the service of the government. As Baldé put it, "Almost all the news they put out is focused around the activities of the president and the first lady. That is why the political parties are constantly demanding free and equal access to those media, which are supposed to reflect the ideas and opinions of all Guineans."

The state media fail to effectively play the public-service role allocated to them because, as mentioned, top editors and managers are selected based on whether they are

loyal to the government, an attitude that persists from Guinea's earlier regimes. "The Guinean media remain heavily politicized," Camara said. "For the state media, for example, appointments of those in ultimate charge are still conditioned by their ability to defend the ideals of the ruling class, or their capacity to allow themselves to be influenced by those above them." As a result, state media programs are vehicles for the ruling party's doctrine, and journalists and their supervisors do not feel that they have been entrusted with any public-service mission. Instead, the private media played that role.

Likewise, though the state media did have some rich cultural and educational programming, the panel found that it was the private media that mostly filled that particular vacuum.

Regarding indicator 4, there are no independent press agencies in Guinea. The Agence Guinéenne de Presse, a state medium, has a news website and a network of correspondents in the chief towns in the prefectures and in the regional capitals. Correspondents distribute written reports to the state radio and television media, the national newspaper *Horoya*, and other users of the system.

Most Guinean media outlets used information from the international press agencies, Agence France-Presse in particular, on an occasional basis to write articles. Much of their use was without attribution.

Regarding indicator 5, the private media produce their own coverage of local current events. Reporting of international news at private radio stations is based on information gathered from foreign radio stations and domestic and international websites. Generally, official information (decrees and decisions of the Council of Ministers and other government decisions) put out by the state media is then carried by the private media.

The news that private media organizations produce is more developed and balanced, given that they are under less government influence and can more closely follow the media code of ethics and professional practice.

The community media (rural radio stations, in particular) are government-controlled but produce programs based on information they gather in their coverage areas.

The online media report both local information and international current events, coverage of which is adapted from international websites or international press agencies.

Regarding indicator 6, media ownership is generally a matter of public record. The airwaves liberalization decree banned political parties and religious denominations from establishing or maintaining media outlets. But that is in

contradiction with what was actually happening on the ground, as Cissé pointed out: "For example, the private radio stations Continental FM and Djigui FM belong to party political leaders who are well known in the country." Baldé disagreed that ownership was generally known: "Personally, I think that the public is not aware of who owns the private media." Diallo remarked, however, that the owners of at least some radio stations did not try to influence their editorial lines.

Regarding online media, the panel concluded that the public is unaware of who owns most news websites, even if the administrators of the websites are well known.

State monopoly of the media ended in 2006, when private radio stations began broadcasting. To date, no foreign investment in the Guinean media has been reported.

Regarding indicator 7, the Guinean media handle a broad spectrum of issues that reflect social interests. The government does not subject the media to any restriction in that regard. The only self-imposed restriction is that for reasons of social mores, the media refrain from covering stories about ethnic conflicts or questions of sexual depravity.

All the country's ethnic groups are represented by various media outlets. The panel noted that efforts were also being made at all levels to ensure that women are well represented, even though gender balance was far from being achieved. Minority languages are used particularly on state radio and television media and even more so on rural radio stations that broadcast news exclusively in local languages.

Programming takes account of the interests of all fringes of the population without discrimination. Community radio programs reflect local concerns that the stations find out about by carrying out surveys.

Regarding indicator 8, the public has access to both local and international news. State radio and television have about 40 local correspondents based in the chief towns of the prefectures and in the regional capitals, and they collect local news on a daily basis for broadcast. National radio, for example, dedicates 30 minutes of its 10 pm news broadcast solely to news from the regions. National television's 7 pm broadcast, also for 30 minutes, was dedicated to news from the provinces. In addition, the state media had local-interest programs on their schedules, such as "Country-Dweller's World," "Journey through Guinea," "History Forum," and "Housewife's Basket." Private radio stations, such as Espace FM, Nostalgie, and Djigui FM, are beginning to follow the same practice by presenting a daily program on news from the regions.

The regional rural radio stations broadcast news that is mainly local (95 percent), either in the form of a local journal or in thematic and national news programs (5 percent) synchronized with national radio. The subjects most often tackled by rural radio include rural development (agriculture, livestock, environment, and improved access to production areas), basic social services (education, health, village water supplies), microfinance, local history, civic education on electoral issues, and consolidating the peace.

All radio stations, private or state, devote about one-third of their news airtime to African and other international news.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Guinea Objective Score: 1.85

Guinea's media businesses received mediocre marks across the board. Market research and circulation statistics remain underutilized. Management remains weak, and firms are rarely profitable.

The panel could not say that Guinean media are well-managed enterprises. Media managers are not always qualified administrators. "People are not partners, so management becomes a very personal thing, as do operating principles," Camara said. In general, the community radio stations are nonprofits, while commercial radio stations, like private newspapers, rely on income from advertising.

Only a few media outlets, including Espace FM, *Nostalgie*, *Le Lynx*, *le Défi*, and Sabary FM have produced consistent profits. *Le Lynx* and *Le Défi* are the only newspapers with their own printing presses.

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.

Afiwa noted, "The problems of personnel management are such that many media outlets do their recruiting without any contracts being signed, with the recruitment based on family ties, because of unemployment and because of the financial difficulties that they might run into if they recruited staff who were actually qualified."

Most media outlets are not operated under adequate financial or personnel management. Afiwa noted, "The problems of personnel management are such that many media outlets do their recruiting without any contracts being signed, with the recruitment based on family ties, because of unemployment and because of the financial difficulties that they might run into if they recruited staff who were actually qualified."

Few media outlets use a consistent system of accounting, and the recruitment of management or marketing personnel is, as described above, done on a subjective basis involving factors such as family relationships. "With few exceptions, proper accounting practice is not followed because everything that comes in goes straight into the boss's pocket," Afiwa said. "That is why many senior management people at press outlets, in particular at private radio stations, have thrown in the sponge. Even after three to five years of existence, some press organs are still not capable of turning a profit and being self-sustaining."

The limited size of the commercial market exposes many community media organizations to financial insecurity, as they cannot count on the slight income from advertising or the advantages of service provision contracts with development partners.

The panel found that the management of the state media, done with generally low budgets, lacked transparency.

Only the state media receive income from the government. However, Cherif observed that "on specific occasions, [other outlets] do receive financial assistance from a number of national and international institutions," such as NGOs and multilateral organizations. Panelists noted that government financing, in practice, rules out the possibility of the independence of the state media.

Community media organizations have no regular sources of finance. They sometimes receive state subsidies for the

purchase of supplies and equipment and the refurbishing of aging facilities; they also get donations from development partners and paid content contracts. The panelists said these relationships usually do not influence the editorial lines or content of the private media.

Some media, such as the Lynx/Lance press group and the *Le Défi* weekly, stand out from the crowd. Diallo said these publications "have succeeded in holding to their course of relevance in the news they provide to the public, of richness and content of debate, variety of writers, and diversity in the opinions expressed. From this we are led to the conclusion that they have solid credibility, which is the foundation of their longevity."

With their own presses, *Le Lynx* and *Le Défi* are self-sustaining and can benefit not only from sales of their own newspapers but also from income from printing other publications. Radio stations such as Nostalgie FM, Liberté FM, Horizon FM, Familia/Renaissance FM, and Sabary FM were financed by their owners. Even so, regardless of their sources of funding, the private media remained independent.

The advertising market is very underdeveloped and restricted to Conakry. There was only one official advertising agency, the Guinean Advertising Office, controlled by the Ministry of Communication. Unofficial bodies also often collaborate with the media. The government share of advertising is considered to be very low, compared with other advertisers.

In general, apart from the state media, advertisers (who include commercial enterprises, NGOs, development partners, and cultural agencies) deal directly with media organizations that ran their ads. For the state media, there is a schedule of advertising rates established by the Guinean Advertising Office. The private media and community radio stations set their rates themselves, sometimes in consultation with the advertiser.

Local best practices dictate that airtime allocated to advertisements on community radio stations should not exceed 10 percent of total programming, whereas for the commercial stations there is a certain degree of flexibility. A 12-page newspaper should not be more than 50 percent advertising. State subsidies do not affect this rule.

Apart from commercial advertising, media also run marriage notices, announcements of artistic, sports, and religious events, and death notices.

Media marketing professionals have not have sufficient training. The panel nevertheless noted that a new generation of specialists has graduated from the professional management schools and is now working in the industry.

Media outlets have few prospective revenue streams outside ad revenue, subscriptions, and sales to pay their permanent and contract personnel. In most cases, ad income is not sufficient to keep them afloat.

In radio and television, commercials range from 30 seconds to a minute long; microprogram spots, a genre used by the rural radio stations, are designed to last three minutes at most. Newspapers tend to allocate about a quarter of their space to advertising. State and community media were not authorized to sell their own advertising space or airtime but must rely on the Advertising Office. They may explore other avenues for acquiring funds besides government money, such as donor subsidies.

For 2011, the state subsidy for the media was GNF 1 billion (\$140,400) to the media, shared out as follows: GNF 166 million (\$23,300) to Internet sites, GNF 500 million (\$70,200) to private radio stations, and GNF 333 million (\$46,700) to private newspapers.

The subsidy was intended to improve the quality of media work and the quality of life of journalists. Among the criteria for receiving subsidy funds were regularity of publication, the existence of a headquarters, number of employees, the condition of the equipment, and the payment of taxes and other such financial duties. Nevertheless, the Guinean Online Press Association said the distribution was unfair. The panel noted that the government did not require any quid pro quo of favorable coverage from private organizations in return for the funding.

Market research, broadcast ratings, circulation figures, and website hit statistics are not yet fully reliable in Guinea. It is rare for research to be carried out to determine the listening or viewing figures for a media outlet, the audience share for a program, or its profitability. Media executives are not trained to develop their organizations with a view to making real money or meeting the needs of the listening, viewing, or reading public.

The panelists agreed that even if there were a market-research agency in Guinea, a comprehensive media audience study has not been undertaken. The few internal assessments carried out by radio stations—for example, to determine their audience figures or the viability of their programming—were based on listener feedback from call-in shows or listeners' letters. Online sites do keep track of their numbers of hits and visitors, though these statistics are subject to manipulation when their owners seek advertisers.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Guinea Objective Score: 2.18

Supporting institutions struggled to provide adequate support to the media in the wake of the crises of 2009-2010. Support from professional associations and NGOs was comparatively solid, as panelists agreed that journalists at risk of violence enjoyed a wave of solidarity from social and democratic movements. Communications infrastructure remained weak, as did the long-term university training programs available to Guineans.

Guinea has no trade associations, but associations of printers and Internet broadcasters represent the interests of some media owners and directors. However, they do not provide sufficient services to all their members. Smaller outlets are generally ignored by these groups.

There are several associations of editors and CEOs of online media and radio stations. These include organizations mentioned throughout this report, such as the Pan-African Association of Women in Communications, the Association of Guinean Journalists, the Guinean Association of Independent Press Publishers, the Association of Guinean Journalist Photo-Reporters, and others. Those associations, together with development partners, offer training sessions to enhance their members' skills. They have also seen success in joint projects, such as the "Democracy Radio" coverage of the elections. They also intervene in defense of journalists who were victims of police brutality or were in conflict with the authorities. However, panelist Afiwa felt that "there are several associations of journalists that are often absent from the field for lack of funding and concrete actions."

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.

Camara observed, "Very few of those universities have practical training centers, such as training studios for radio and television press, printed newsletters for their own journalism higher-education institutions, or even websites."

The aforementioned associations have strong memberships and carry out their activities freely. They have links with international organizations.

Regarding indicator 3, organizations and other activists stand up for freedom of speech and for journalists who were victims of intimidation by the authorities. Conakry-based organizations advocating for human rights speak up whenever there was such a case and lobbied the CNC or the government on behalf of the victims. Baldé confirmed, noting, "As the media are the barometer of freedom of expression, freedom of speech, we keep our eye on them in relation to compliance with the principles of democracy and good governance. Our advocacy is directed toward ensuring that the work of journalists is respected."

University-level training for journalists is provided by the Institute of Information and Communication Sciences (ISIC) in Kountia, a suburb of Conakry. A number of universities, such as the Aboubacar Camara Foundation, Mercure University, Nelson Mandela and Kofi Annan University, La Source University, Fayol Plus University, and René Lévesque University, all also have journalism degree courses. ISIC, with the support of development partners, particularly French organizations, has equipped two modern radio and television studios, which has contributed to a gradual improvement in the quality of the teaching. Outside the ISIC, the other institutions offer poor-quality training, though the instructors have worked in the field. Camara observed, "Very few of those universities have practical training centers, such as training studios for radio and television press, printed newsletters for their own journalism higher-education institutions, or even websites."

Because of the high cost, few students can go to journalism schools abroad. Only a handful from wealthy families has managed to obtain diplomas from Moroccan or French universities. Apprehensive about being able to find work easily once they return to Guinea, many of them prefer to stay in the country where they have studied.

Even though the supply of new graduates is far below the demand, in most cases media outlets are far from satisfied with the quality of the trainees who come to them. "The diplomas from those schools are just like the diplomas

handed out by the Guinean education system. No one who comes into the profession has any solid training in journalism," Afiwa said. "[But] they all get people to call them journalists."

Local organizations, with the support of development partners, increasingly are running training sessions for media professionals. Search for Common Ground has offered training in media ethics and professional practice, journalistic genres and formats, coverage of elections, and institutional communication. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) ran a program that teaches radio presenters about interactivity. The French RFI-Talent program, the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation, USAID, and the Canadian International Development Agency also offered training. These free courses, given on the basis of need expressed by professional media associations, helped journalists upgrade their work, according to the panelists knowledgeable of them. Media outlets also provided on-the-job training for new employees in their newsrooms.

Private importers have benefited from tax breaks from the Budget Ministry in relation to imports of inputs for newspaper productions. However, printers find those imports very costly on the market. The price of a ream of paper recently rose from GNF 170,000 (\$24) to GNF 270,000 (\$38). That forced some newspaper owners, who were able to pay by the ton, to import newsprint from Senegal.

Very few printers have modern, high-quality equipment, so print quality falls short. The government had only one printing operation, based at the Ministry of Communication, which offered its services to all press organs without discrimination. Private printers likewise offered their services to anyone, focusing only on their profitability.

The government does not impose any controls on channels of distribution of media content, and opposition parties are able to exert even less pressure. Internet service providers, cable companies, telephone companies, and printing houses are not subject to any state constraints. However, ARPT requires there to be interconnection between all the telephone companies operating in Guinea.

State radio and television are distributed over transmitters managed by the Guinean Telecommunications Company (SOTELGUI), which provides coverage through the country and over a Ministry of Communication satellite uplinking system. Private and community radio stations have HF broadcasting equipment.

Wealthier people have cable subscriptions and can easily access various television channels, including the local ones. In Conakry and certain other towns, people can access the cable network by paying a subscription of GNF 10,000 (\$1.40)

a month. In most places, people can access foreign television stations (to watch soccer games, for example) by using video rooms for the modest price of GNF 1,000 (\$0.14).

On certain rare occasions, the state interrupted SMS communications for security reasons. While many media outlets are connected to the Internet, particularly in their editorial offices, the panelists judged connection speeds to be very low. The state does not have control over online media, given that none of the sites are hosted in Guinea.

ICT infrastructure in Guinea is very underdeveloped. Though there has been a rise in the number of cybercafés and mobile companies, with five operating in the country, the panelists noted that the service provided was far below consumers' expectations.

The project to put a submarine fiber-optic connection in place is coming along slowly, even though the cable has landed in Conakry. Some observers believe that installation has stopped altogether, though information on the project is slight. In general, the Internet connection is poor and does not enable users to communicate easily with their correspondents abroad, severely limiting their ability to share large files. Even so, radio and television are increasingly using sophisticated technical equipment and digital broadcasting. Radio stations such as Nostalgie, Espace FM, and Renaissance FM broadcast over the telephone networks and the Internet.

Outages were frequent on some mobile-telephone networks, while the state telecom suffers from particularly poor management. The panelists noted that a large percentage of the population in urban and rural areas alike have cellphones, but in general information and communications technology capacity in the towns is higher than in rural areas.

List of Panel Participants

Ismail Kabine Camara, journalist, tamtamguinee.com, Conakry

Chaikou Balde, journalist, Guinean Human Rights Organization, Conakry

Mohamed Camara, independent jurist, Conakry

Mamady Yaya Cissé, professor, Kountia Higher Institute of Information and Communication, Conakry

Alpha Abdoulaye Diallo, journalist, Guinean Independent Press Association, Conakry

Amara Camara, editor-in-chief, Radio Television Guinnee, Conakry

Alpha Ousmane Souaré, reporter, Horizon FM, Conakry

Mata Afiwa, presenter, Soleil FM, Conakry

Facely Conde, presenter, Kankan Rural Region Radio, Kankan

Ibrahima Mané, reporter, Bambou FM, Coyah

Oumou Khairy Cherif, reporter, Independent Press Group, Conakry

Moderator and Author

Marcel Sow, independent consultant, Conakry

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