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NIGERIA

A heightened state of insecurity has dogged Nigeria over the last year, impacting seriously the media both directly and indirectly. By far the most serious manifestation of the problem was the terrorist attacks unleashed on the country by the Islamic militant group known as Boko Haram. The group intensified its attacks over the last year, detonating bombs in public places and on private property in various cities in the northern part of Nigeria, as well as in Abuja. In other instances, members of the group carried out gun attacks in similar places. The situation took a dangerous turn in 2012 when media organizations were deliberately targeted in these attacks, ostensibly as a result of unfavorable media coverage of the group's activities.

For instance, on April 26, 2012, the Abuja office of Leaders and Company Limited, publishers of *ThisDay* newspaper, was attacked by a suicide bomber. Simultaneously, in Kaduna in north-western Nigeria, a building that houses the offices of three daily newspapers, *Daily Sun*, *ThisDay*, and *The Moment* was also bombed. Five people were reported to have been killed as a result. Prior to the attack, on March 11, 2012, the group had threatened to take measures against three newspapers for allegedly misreporting its declarations and for reports favorable of the government or security agents or both. In October 2011, Alhaji Zakariya Isa, a cameraman with the federal government-owned Nigeria Television Authority, was killed by three gunmen suspected to be members of Boko Haram at his residence in Maiduguri.

On May 1, 2012, the group posted a video on YouTube in which it warned of more attacks on media organizations, naming the media institutions that will be the targets in such future attacks; it also claimed responsibility for the April 26 attacks in the same video.

Over the last few years, there have also a number of journalists killed in suspicious circumstances; these cases remain unresolved. In virtually all cases, the police claim that the journalists were killed during robberies and they have been unable to solve them.

All of these cases continue to cause fear and anxiety within the media community, serve to muzzle reporting, and dampen reporting that would better serve the information needs of citizens.

Nigeria's overall score remains almost identical to 2010. However, individual objective scores did move, and changes offset each other. For example, Objective 1, Freedom of Speech, increased by 0.40 and Objective 2, Professional Journalism, increased by 0.17. On the other side, Objective 4, Business Management, lost ground by 0.36 and Objective 5, Supporting Institutions, showed a small decrease of 0.11.

NIGERIA AT A GLANCE

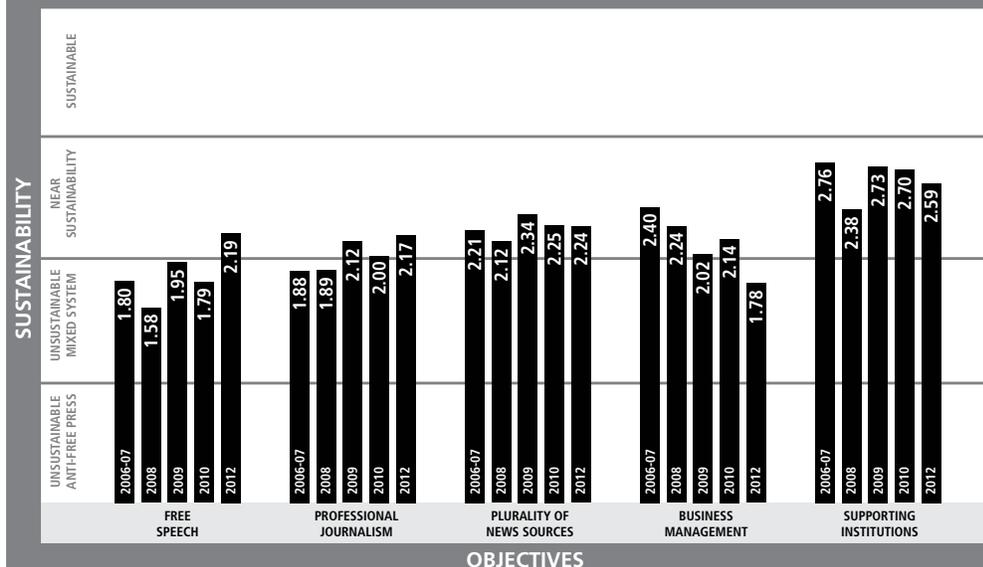
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 170,123,740 (July 2012 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 (2011-Atlas):** \$195.3 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2012)
- > **GNI per capita (2011-PPP):** \$2,300 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2012)
- > **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:** Print: 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). Radio Stations: 126 (16 privately owned, 27 not-for-profit campus radio stations, 45 owned by the federal government, and 38 owned by various state governments). Television Stations: 104 (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: 2.19

The overall average score for this Objective, 2.19, improved significantly from previous years due to the panelists' assessment of the availability of public information and the existence of a right of access to information for media, journalists, and citizens. The panelists also continued to rate highly the absence of any legal restrictions on media outlet access to and use of local and international news and news sources and the fact that entry into the journalism profession is free and that government imposes no licensing restrictions or special rights for journalists.

The consensus among the panelists was that, although there are laws that protect press freedom and access to public information, religious and cultural sensibilities in society constitute serious challenges to the enjoyment of these rights. Femi Akanni, a journalist with the Lagos State Government-owned Traffic Radio station, was of the view that free speech and access to information are still novel concepts in Nigeria compared to western nations where they have taken root. He believes, however, that they are catching up in Nigeria but that laws guaranteeing free speech and access to information are not yet being fully implemented.

Motunrayo Alaka, the coordinator of Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism, stressed that Nigeria has laws that guarantee press freedom and access to information, and

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.

quoted Sections 22 and 39 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution as well as the Freedom of Information Act of 2011, all of which she says protect free speech and access to information.

Tunde Akanni, a lecturer at the Lagos State University's Department of Communication Studies, was of the view that social conventions limit tolerance of free speech, especially when it has to do with viewpoints on religious and cultural issues.

Seun Bisuga, a reporter with Independent Communications Limited, publishers of the daily evening newspaper *PM News* and the weekly news magazine *The News*, stressed that Nigerians are now able to express themselves freely in blogs and other social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, in addition to using public protests, among others. He noted that the nationwide protests in early 2011 over the government's attempt to withdraw subsidies from petrol showed clearly that Nigerians have been able to express their opinions on issues that influence the government's final decision.

It is important to note that Nigeria still has a licensing process in broadcasting that vests the final authority for issuing broadcast licenses with the president. This situation does not ensure that the process is apolitical, although the president's decision is expected to be based on the recommendations of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), the regulatory body. It is still not quite clear what considerations the NBC takes into account in determining who gets a broadcast license and who does not since there are not clearly established criteria, in addition to the fact that the licensing process is neither open nor transparent.

Tolu Olanrewaju of the University of Lagos campus radio station, Unilag FM, remarked that to date Nigeria has had no truly community radio station, despite a public statement by the president in October 2010 that he had authorized the NBC to issue broadcast licenses to communities seeking to establish community radio stations and delegated his powers to issue the licenses to the NBC.

Grace Alegba, a reporter with the federal-government-owned News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) argued that the NBC is not living up to its responsibilities, because, although some privately owned media organizations report ethically, those which do not report ethically are never sanctioned. But Femi Akanni noted that the NBC is handicapped in the performance of its functions because it does not have the power to grant broadcast licenses, which makes it difficult for it to be effective in sanctioning media organizations.

There was consensus among the panelists that there is a sufficiently large number of broadcast stations in the country and that there is a fair level of competition among them,

despite the fact that the process of granting broadcast licenses for radio and television operations is not fair, competitive, or apolitical.

Adetokunbo Abiola, who writes for the Ondo state government-owned *Hope* newspaper, noted that the setting up of newspaper houses was not regulated and that it is quite easy to establish and operate a newspaper.

There were widely disparate views on whether market entry and tax structure for media are fair and comparable to other industries. These differences in opinion were also evident in the scoring: panelists entered scores that ranged from within the “unsustainable, mixed system” range up to “sustainable.”

Gbenga Salau, a reporter with *The Guardian* newspaper, observed that media houses have to pay various taxes, including value added tax for media consumables. Tunde Akanni noted that the media in Nigeria do not receive government support as practiced in some other countries, arguing that the government could make the business of operating media houses better by giving a moratorium on the payment of taxes. He drew comparison to countries where the governments support media development through grant funds and other mechanisms. Although he conceded that the government does not impose extra taxes on media operations over and above other types of businesses, he further argued that the media business is different from other types of business and therefore ought to be given special consideration in the imposition of taxes.

Segun Fatuase, the online editor of the daily *National Mirror* newspapers, noted that the import tariffs on media consumables are too high and that these have a great impact on cost of production. He was of the view that there should be tax differentiations between what media establishments pay and what other businesses pay. He said because of the huge and rising overhead costs that media establishments have to bear and the low sales in media products and services, there will very likely soon be a downsizing by media houses.

Bisuga sought to reinforce the argument by noting that the media provide specialized services and that the rate of profit from media products and services is not as high as other business sectors like telecommunications. For these reasons, he believes, government ought to give media establishments some tax rebates. Alaka argued that although there is a level playing field between the media and other businesses, the Nigerian media may need a bailout. She said the media is facing rising costs for equipment and multiple taxes, but conceded that these are not a result of their operations but a general feature of the business environment in Nigeria.

The panelists were united in their disagreement with the suggestion that crimes against media professionals, citizen reporters, and media outlets are vigorously prosecuted or that the occurrence of such crimes is rare. The scoring on this indicator was generally low.

Bisi Olaleye, a reporter with the *Daily Sun* newspaper, argued that crimes against the media are not prosecuted vigorously, citing recent cases of journalists who were brutalized yet most of those cases were not before any court. She recalled she once reported a story about a man who died in detention and as a result her life was threatened and she had to go into hiding. Femi Akanni said there is a systemic failure in the security situation in the country, arguing that the general situation is that there is no protection for citizens, which is not necessarily limited to journalists alone. He cited the case of the assassination of Chief Bola Ige, who was at the time the attorney-general of the federation and minister of justice. He said if such a high-ranking government official could be murdered while still in office with the perpetrators never arrested or prosecuted, it should be no surprise that journalists are not getting any special protection.

Idara Ukpayang, of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria in Abuja, called attention to the fact that at times, crimes against journalists have caused public outcry. She cited the case of a photo-journalist, Benedict Uwalaka, who was brutally attacked by mortuary attendants at the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital and severely injured while covering the release of the corpses of victims from the Dana Air crash by the management of the hospital. That case indeed created public outcry. Tina Akannam, the Jigawa state correspondent of the *Vanguard* newspaper, agreed that incidents of attacks on journalists in some cases elicited public outcry; she was more optimistic on the frequency of such attacks, saying they are rarer than other panelists contended.

On the issue of whether the law protects the editorial independence of state or public media, the panelists generally scored the indicator low. Media organizations owned by the government, whether at the federal or state levels, hardly have any editorial independence and are not protected by law against external interference. Indeed, the laws establishing government owned media, including the Nigerian Television Authority, the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, the Voice of Nigeria, and the News Agency of Nigeria make it clear that they are to take instructions from the responsible minister, which is the minister for information, and that they are obliged to comply with those instructions.

Femi Akanni, of Lagos-state-owned Traffic Radio, insisted that there is political interference with editorial independence of state or publicly-owned media in Nigeria, a view supported by Abiola of the Ondo State owned *Hope* newspaper, who

argued that the government in power usually determines the level of editorial independence that a state or publicly-owned media outlet can enjoy. Abiola said even where the law grants editorial independence, in practice, there is no editorial independence.

Ukpayang noted that the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, where she works, is influenced so much by the minister of information that he forces the station to air whatever program he deems fit and asks the station not to air, or to discontinue airing, others. She cited a case where the minister truncated airing of a paid program by the government of one of the southwestern states ruled by the opposition Action Congress of Nigeria party even before it began. She added that the minister also at times forces the station to give prominence to news stories not sourced by the station's reporters that the station's editors would not normally highlight.

Alegba reported that at her employer, NAN, reporters are warned not to write "satanic" stories or stories that will put them in trouble. Olanrewaju said at UNILAG FM, where he works, employees practice self-censorship.

Panelists also observed that state stations are quite often not allowed to run even advertisements placed by opposition parties.

Libel is both a civil and criminal offense in Nigeria. Criminal defamation is entrenched in several laws including the federal Criminal Code, which is applicable in the southern states, and in the federal Penal Code, which is applicable in northern Nigeria, as well as in the criminal laws of virtually all the 36 states.

Damages awarded to public officials whenever they win civil libel cases against media organizations are usually very heavy compared with damages awarded to ordinary citizens who are able to prove libel. Public officials are not held to higher standards.

Olaleye noted that the *Daily Sun* newspaper currently has more than 230 libel cases pending against it and has so far won only three of them.

There was a consensus among the panelists that although a Freedom of Information Act has been adopted in Nigeria, public information is still not easily available and that the right of access to information is not equally enforced. Salau argued that the exemption clauses of the Freedom of Information Act are too restrictive, with the overall effect that access to information is not adequately guaranteed.

Panelists were in agreement that media outlets' access to, and use of, local and international news and news sources is not restricted by law.

Entry into the journalism profession is free and government imposes no licensing, restrictions, or special rights for journalists. However, participants pointed out that the Nigerian Press Council law prescribes minimum qualifications for anyone to practice journalism and that, although the Nigeria Union of Journalists supports such a requirement, it is generally ignored.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Nigeria Objective Score: 2.17

The score for this Objective is 2.17, the highest for this objective since the MSI first studied Nigeria in 2006/2007.

Some of the panelists admitted that there are some serious shortcomings, however. Journalists sometimes write stories that they did not cover personally after receiving money to report a certain way that is dictated to them. In addition, there is a practice of forming "beat associations" by journalists covering the same beat: members share their stories with each other and such stories are thereafter published without vetting or editing, the resulting in the same story appearing in the same format in several different newspapers.

Salau, however, insisted that many journalists still go to sources for stories rather than wait to syndicate news stories written by other members of a beat. He noted that where a story is controversial, no editor will publish a one-sided story.

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).

Alegba expressed concern about plagiarism because some media organizations use reports from NAN, her employer, without properly crediting the source, which, she argued, is unprofessional. She also said that she knows for a fact that some journalists are on the payroll of politicians for regularly getting stories published for them, whether the matter reported took place or not.

Ukpayang argued that regardless of such examples, on the whole she feels that the media have performed well, describing such wayward journalists as the “black sheep.”

Bose Olusola-Obasa, senior correspondent at *The Punch*, said such cases are inexcusable and stressed that her newspaper insists that things be done well. Olanrewaju pointed out that such cases are bound to occur as there is pervasive poverty and corruption in Nigeria to which journalists are exposed.

There was no agreement that journalists follow recognized and accepted ethical standards. Fatuase said in many instances, commercial considerations and advertising placements determine whether certain news stories will be published or not.

Reference was also made to a new trend where media organizations charge official fees to cover certain news events, particularly product launches by businesses. Such rates for the coverage of various types of events are published; businesses, organizations, or individuals seeking to have such events covered have to pay the advertised rates. Some panelists argued that it is simply a pragmatic strategy by media organizations to generate revenue and survive and that there is nothing wrong with the strategy so long as the whole process is transparent.

But others argued that it is unethical and unprofessional as the code of ethics for Nigerian journalists and the Nigerian Broadcasting Code stipulate that news should not be paid for. Besides, they said, it is unlikely that the media organizations would be able to carry negative reports, even if warranted, where the coverage has been paid for. They also argue that the news stories from such events are reported within the general news without any indication to the audience that the coverage was paid for, which is misleading.

Ukpayang said although Radio Nigeria has been ordered not to collect money for news stories, the station has asked its reporters to try to be creative in seeing that they make money from news and to avoid NBC's restrictions.

Olaleye argued that the solution to the issue of professional misconduct of this nature is for salaries and emoluments of journalists to be adequate so that journalists would not be tempted into taking bribes. Fatuase said, “Poverty

due to poor remuneration has conditioned journalists to compromise standards.”

Fatuase further cited the practice within the Nigerian Guild of Editors to hold its meetings in states that are rich and, in some instances, the editors collect money from the state governments. He wondered if those editors who collect so much money from state governors have the moral right to sanction their reporters who are proven to have collected bribes.

There was consensus among the panelists that journalists and editors, for various reasons, practice self-censorship.

The panelists also agreed that the media cover virtually all issues and that the salaries and emoluments paid to Nigerian journalists are generally low.

The participants agreed that in the broadcast sector, entertainment programs are eclipsing news programs; panelists agreed that this is not the case for the print media.

The panelists noted that over time the facilities and equipment for gathering, producing, and distributing news have improved and are becoming increasingly more efficient; the technologies available to Nigerian journalists, however, are still not up to date. Bisuga said, “Foreign media are using the latest technologies but not Nigerian journalists.”

Ukpayang argued that facilities and equipment are better in the print sector but that there has been little or no improvement in the broadcast sector. Panelists said the constraint is that, in many places, media organizations are not providing modern facilities and equipment for news operations. The panelists agreed that modern equipment for gathering and disseminating news is available, but cited expense as the reason most media organizations are either unwilling or unable to purchase them for their reporters.

Fatuase said that although many journalists specialize in niche reporting, the quality of niche reporting is poor. He cited investigative reporting as one area where quality is poor in particular.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

Nigeria Objective Score: 2.24

Most of the panelists agreed that there are multiple news sources and that people rely on them. Abiola was of the view that although these exist, a majority of Nigerians do not access news through these means. Bisuga remarked that a lot of Nigerians now use and access news through social media, so much so that Nigerian issues very often trend on twitter.

The panelists agreed that citizens' access to domestic or international media is not restricted by law but by other factors. Tunde Akanni said access to domestic or international media is sometimes determined by the individual's economic circumstances and technological literacy. But he noted that, "Digitization has helped to create alternative publishing platforms. Stories deemed too controversial for conventional media can and do make it into the public domain via the Internet because leading daily newspapers often pride themselves on being too serious to break this sort of news."

Panelists rated the indicator that state or public media reflect the views of the political spectrum, are non-partisan, and serve the public interest lower than others in this objective. Most of the panelists were of the view that state media often reflect only the perspectives of those in the ruling party, whether at the federal or state levels, while opposition parties and critical voices are invariably shut out.

Abiola said although in Ondo State, where he works for the state government newspaper, both ruling party and opposition stories are being reported, the state media often reports only negative stories about the opposition; such negative stories are given a lot of prominence.

NAN is the only domestic news agency in Nigeria and its enabling law, the News Agency of Nigeria Act, provides that it should have a monopoly in the gathering and distribution of local and international news to media organizations. However, panelists noted that the media often also rely on international news agencies and wire services for news and information.

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.

Panelists agreed that private media generally produce their own news. There was also consensus among them that ownership of media organizations is not transparent, as the owners of many media companies are not known. In addition, panelists agreed that media ownership in Nigeria is not concentrated.

There are no media organizations dedicated to the coverage of women's issues in Nigeria. Coverage of women and women's issues by mainstream media remains very low, averaging less than 10 percent of editorial content in comparison with coverage of men. In the absence of community radio and television stations and with most radio and television stations located in major cities and urban areas, there is very little coverage of community issues and issues affecting ethnic and religious minorities. A few community newspapers exist, particularly in the Niger Delta region, which is made up of scores of ethnic minorities. Such newspapers attempt to focus on issues affecting those communities. But, such newspapers have very weak financial bases, appear on newsstands irregularly (depending on when they have money to print), and their circulation figures are very poor. There are no broadcast media that broadcast exclusively in languages other than English, although radio and television news bulletins are sometimes translated into the major local language of the areas where they are based. On the average, the amount of content that is broadcast in local languages is very low.

Different media outlets cover news and issues according to their focus. The dozen or so national newspapers mostly cover national issues, although there are usually some local, regional, and international issues as well. The broadcast media also report a mixture of local, national, regional and international news and issues, although they are mostly dominated by coverage of national issues. Typically, however, the stories in national news outlets about small cities and rural areas have a national significance.

The local affiliates of the Nigerian Television Authority and the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria provide local news and news from neighboring states and regions.

Nigerian media hardly write their own stories about international events; usually they reproduce stories from the News Agency of Nigeria or those from international news agencies or wire services.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Nigeria Objective Score: 1.78

The overall average score for this Objective is 1.74, the lowest ever average score for this objective since the study began in 2006/2007 and the first time it has scored less than 2.00.

Most panelists said although media outlets are established to be self-sustaining, they usually end up not employing professionals to manage departments such as accounting, marketing, and human resources.

The panelists also agreed that Nigerian media organizations receive revenue from a number of sources, but noted that these sources are few and include subventions, advertising, and sponsorship.

Advertising agencies and related industries support the advertising market in the media. However, panelists complained about the challenge that media organizations face in collecting payments from advertising companies, which usually place advertisements on credit.

Some media organizations have policies on acceptable standards in terms of percentage of space or air time devoted to advertising in comparison to news content. However, the vast majority of media organizations do not appear to have any policy in this regard. Panelists observed that even some of the media organizations that have such policies do not apply them strictly in the face of a constant struggle to improve revenue flows. Most media organizations would take as much advertising as they can get and panelists gave instances when media organizations have at the very last minute displaced news to accommodate last-minute advertisements.

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.

The panelists said while state-owned media organizations receive subventions and subsidies from governments, both federal and state, there are no government subsidies for private media. Government ministries, departments, and agencies are the biggest advertisers in the media, both state-owned and privately-owned. But government advertising dollars are not evenly distributed.

In some cases, the promise of advertising or the threat of withdrawal of advertising is used to subvert editorial independence, even in privately owned media organizations.

Panelists said some media organizations use market research to formulate strategic plans, enhance advertising revenue, and tailor their products to the needs and interests of their audiences. However, most media organizations do not use any market research. Even among those that use market research, this is not consistently done; in some cases, the quality of the market research is very poor.

There was consensus among the panelists that broadcast ratings, circulation figures, and Internet statistics, where they exist, are not reliably generated. Most media organizations simply announce circulation figures or audience reach but these are not subjected to any independent verification.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Nigeria Objective Score: 2.59

Panelists agreed that trade associations exist but insisted that in most cases they do not adequately represent their members. Panelists said they appear to be motivated by the selfish interests of the leaders who use them to seek patronage from government officials and corporate bodies. Trade associations very rarely advocate for media independence, although there are no legal restrictions to their formation or operation.

Panelists agreed that there are professional media associations that advocate for the welfare of journalists who are their members, in addition to providing some services. Some of the professional associations are effective and their membership is growing. A few media organizations have banned their workers, including journalists, from forming or joining any professional association.

However, panelists said membership revenue is not enough to support the associations and, as a result, the associations solicit and receive sponsorships from governments and corporate bodies to carry out some of their programs and activities.

Akannam noted, "There is a proliferation of organizations representing specific sectors of the profession, which the Nigeria Union of Journalists is unable to manage properly, such as the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria, Aviation Correspondents, Crime Reporters, Business Reporters, Energy Correspondents, Judicial Correspondents, etc. Though the roles of these organizations are still not properly defined, they are seen as a major source of corruption in the media that do not favor professional reporting in the areas they claim. Some of them allegedly receive large sums of money from organizations or institutions that they cover, which are shared among members to ensure favorable coverage and suppress negative reports."

There was consensus among the panelists that NGOs that support free speech and independent media exist and are doing a great job. This indicator received the highest scores from panelists in this objective.

The panelists agreed that there are numerous institutions providing journalism programs both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. However, journalists usually have to pay for short term training as media organizations hardly provide or cover training courses for their staff. Local and international organizations, including NGOs, also provide or sponsor some short-term training for journalists in various areas.

Tunde Akanni, a journalism teacher the Lagos State University's Communications Department, lamented that the industry does not consider it important to give back to the training institutions in the form of endowed chairs and similar initiatives to enhance and promote journalism training and research programs.

The panelists agreed that short term training and in-service training programs are available and valuable as they enable journalists to

update their knowledge and skills while also exposing them to new developments that are relevant for their work.

The panelists also agreed that sources of media equipment, newsprint, and printing facilities are apolitical, not monopolized, and are not restricted. They however noted that purchase and acquisition of such equipment is expensive and many media houses and journalists cannot afford them.

There was consensus among the panelists that channels of media distribution are apolitical. The panelists again agreed that available ICT infrastructure meets the needs of the media and citizens, but noted that not everyone can afford it given the relatively high cost of access.

List of Panel Participants

Adetokunbo Abiola, correspondent, *Hope*, Akure

Tina Akannam, Jigawa correspondent, *Vanguard*, Dutse

Idara Ukpanyang, correspondent, Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, Abuja

Esther Egbe, reporter, *National Daily*, Lagos

Oluwafemi Akanni, news/program presenter, Lagos Television, Lagos

Emmanuel Toluwalope Olarewaju, production manager, University of Lagos' UNILAG 103.1 FM, Lagos

Grace Alegba, correspondent, News Agency of Nigeria, Lagos

Motunrayo Adunni Alaka, coordinator, Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism, Lagos

Bisi Olaleye, correspondent, *The Sun*, Lagos

Bisuga Oluwaseun, correspondent, *PM News* and *The News Magazine*, Lagos

Gbenga Salau, reporter, *The Guardian*, Lagos

Adenike Sanda, Nigeria Association of Women Journalists; correspondent, Murhi International Television, Lagos

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

Bosede Olusola-Obasa, senior correspondent, *The Saturday Punch*, Lagos

Segun Fatuase, editor, online and web operations, *National Mirror*, Lagos

Moderator and Author

Edetaen Ojo, executive director, Media Rights Agenda, Lagos

The panel discussion was convened on September 22, 2012.

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.