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AFRICA MEDIA REVIEW

1997 Volume 11 No. 2



• **Communication Policies in Civilian and Military Regimes: The Case of Ghana**
By Audrey Gadzekpo

• **South African Communication Policy: Strategies for Influencing Government Strategies**
By Eronini R. Megwa

• **Communication and Journalism Curricula in Africa: The Case of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania**
By Polycarp Omolo Ochilo

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Comments on this Issue

This issue of *Africa Media Review* contains some of the papers that were presented at a workshop on Communication Policies and Media Regulatory Systems in May, 1997 in Nairobi, Kenya. All the articles address different aspects of communications policy and cover different countries in Africa. The only exception is the article by Polycarp Ochilo which is on Communication and Journalism Curricula in Africa: The case of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. This article is the result of a survey conducted by the author on the subject of communication and journalism curricula in the region. The study was sponsored by UNESCO. The author concedes that there is need to revise the existing communication and journalism curricula to make it more tolerant to the challenges facing the nations covered in the survey. The author insists some of the major challenges here to be determined by a revised curriculum.

The paper by Gideon Shoo is on New Press Bills in Tanzania and its implications for National Communication Policy and Press platform. The paper is a modest critique of the oppressive media laws in Tanzania and calls for the review of these laws in order to enable the media to play their role in the governing process. The paper also decries the vague communications policy in Tanzania and calls for a clearer communications policy.

The article on South African communication Policy starts by commending the government of South Africa for repealing the oppressive media laws that served the apartheid regime. The paper goes on to call on the government to devise a comprehensive communications policy and profound training packages for journalists. This would strengthen and professionalize the media industry and safeguard the new plural political system.

Communication Policies in Civilian and Military Regimes: The Case of Ghana is the title of Audrey Gadzekpo's paper in which the author critically evaluates media legislation in Ghana since independence in 1957. The article reveals the chequered

government - press relationship that perpetuated a timid press in Ghana but observes that there are some positive changes that the reformed President Jerry Rawling's government. The author however regrets that lack of clear policy to deal with new information world order. The paper concludes by calling for the creation of a truly democratised legal infrastructure for the media to enable the media play a role in national development.

In the article on New Press Bills in Uganda: Implications for National Communication Policy and Press Freedom, Nassanga Goretta Linda presents the government's perspective of professionalisation of journalism and liberalization of the media in the country. The paper mildly criticises suspect media and broadcast councils whose composition are dominated by people hand-picked by the Minister for Communications. Like other contributors to this volume, Linda calls for a more comprehensive communication policy in Uganda.

Makumi Mwagiru raises very interesting perspectives on the subject of media rights. This is contained in his article on A Return to Basics: Media Rights as Fundamental Human Rights. He calls for the creation of a people-centered and responsive media arguing that the people are integral stake-holders in the media industry, and as such it is argued, must be protected by the constitution as media rights. To the author, media rights must be considered as human rights. Based on this premise, the author contends that the current debate to verge on media reforms is ill informed if it does not include constitutional reform.

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