

GOVERNANCE, Ethics and Leadership

Mo Ibrahim on Media and Governance in Africa

Ibrahim urges AMLF delegates to have the confidence to lead



Mo Ibrahim on Media and Governance in Africa

Straight-talking Sudanese mobile communications billionaire, Dr Mohamed "Mo" Ibrahim, lamented the "tremendous lack of governance in the European Union" over the debt crisis at the closing ceremony of the fourth African Media Leaders Forum.

Ibrahim, whose foundation supports the AMLF, said that "something interesting" had happened to capitalism because we now have a situation where "banks keep profits private and socialize their debt".

"If the banks did not know Greece was bankrupt, who would know? Sometimes you look at Africa with despair, but [compared with Europe] maybe we are not so bad, actually. Yes, we have Mugabe, but they [Europe] have Berlusconi," he joked.

He urged over 350 of Africa's independent media proprietors and leaders at the largest-ever AMLF conference to stand together in the face of intense political and economic pressure.

"The best protection for you is this togetherness. Let us, with confidence, drive Africa," he said.

Dr Ibrahim said that economic pressures on media organisations led to the temptation to write sensational journalism and said that he had once asked a group of journalists what headline would sell their paper the next day. They came up with, 'The Queen is pregnant!'

"Secrets, scandals, sex, royalty, religion sells, so you have that pressure on your business. At the same time you have to be correct, proper, responsible – we hope you make the right choices," he said.

Asked by a Forum delegate for a single tip for success in leadership, Ibrahim responded that clarity of purpose was important: "Stick to it. Don't change with fashion. Have your vision clear and focus on it. We must also know that nothing comes for free."

Media Leaders Perspectives on Ethics and Leadership

Lotfi Madani of the AfDB introduced the question:

Are journalism-schools and media leaders collaborating effectively to produce properly trained journalists?

Madani also asked: "at the interface between media management and training structures (specialized training centers, schools of journalism), how do we set up negotiation processes to match required skills and training offered? Does new media emergence mean that we have to find new ways to teach and prepare media professionals?"

Robert Kabushenga of New Vision Media Group in Uganda and Chris Roper of South Africa discussed their frustrations with the training of journalists in Africa and made suggestions on how it could be done. Kabushenga highlighted a number of problems with the training or lack thereof at African training institutions.

Kabushenga's first gripe was with the lack of technological training for journalists. There are very few, and in many African countries, no colleges which will train printers in print technology or teach radio technicians. He then focussed on the problems in the radio industry. "Because the radio industry, in the part of the continent where I come from, is essentially entertainment, most of the people who work on radio are entertainers and the first time they learn how to work in a radio station is when they are on air. With that kind of a situation, it's no wonder that

some of these technologies are used for hate speech and insurrections that cause big problems."

Kabushenga also said that a worrying amount of teachers at training institutions have never spent a meaningful period of time in a newsroom. As a result the industry is failing to get people with skills.

To the audience's amusement, Kabushenga stated, "I have lost faith in the formal training institutions and have fallen in love with the Germans!" The reason for this is that the Germans have two systems of training. At universities, students study media studies and become teachers. For those students who want to practise journalism or do media work, they go to polytechnics. Media companies in Germany are actively involved at the polytechnics in developing practical skills that are required in the media industry."

QUOTES OF NOTE

"This debate about technology just frustrates me so much. If you find me standing naked in the car park, it's partly because of that frustration. My journalists have no clue how to be impactful online" **African Media Leader.**

"It was only last year that social

Ingrid Louw, Nii Laryea Sowah and Louise Vale gave various reasons why the creation of associations are beneficial to media owners.

Ingrid Louw is the Chief Executive Officer of Print Media South Africa (PMSA). This voluntary association consists of three member associations, namely, The Newspaper Association of South Africa, The Magazine Publishers Association and The Association of Independent Publishers.

The Association, which is funded by media houses, provides secretarial support for community journalism, shares funding for the joint industry research and responds to their members' needs.

Louw listed the benefits of having an association:

- The cooperation and collaboration. We understand that media owners are fierce competitors, but are joining forces in certain areas for the greater good.
- The Association provides a safe space for the collective intelligence of the industry to deliberate on public issues. A safe place is important, because if they did not have that they would not have the opportunity to deliberate and discuss and come up with solutions.
- We have unified representation on critical industry issues.
- We have strategic relationship management with the advertising and marketing industry.
- We have public-private partnerships with government.
- We lobby on legislative matters.

Nii Laryea Sowah of The Association of Private Newspapers in Ghana, then discussed why the formation of newspaper associations is imperative.

"It is important that media owners realise that it is only when they come together that they can fight inimical laws that are posed by dictatorships," said Sowah.

Through structures such as the media associations as well as civil society organisations, criminal libel law, which is detrimental to media freedom and free expression, can be fought. "Recently we had to fight parliament on the access to information bill because they had smuggled some clauses into the bill. We also mobilised other civil society organisations. We are only able to fight some of these laws because we have these media structures in place," said Sowah.

Louise Vale, the Executive Director of the Association of Independent Publishers (AIP) in South Africa, describes AIP as a national association for grassroots independent print media. "This association represents the under belly or possibly the unknown and not understood sector of the media in South Africa."

Most of AIP's members publish in the rural areas and disadvantaged communities and as such they often function on a financial knife edge. According to Vale, the purpose of the AIP is to fully promote and express the interests of the industry and to help each individual to become a profitable and sustainable business. AIP works with freedom of expression and free press and adheres to codes of conduct such as the press code.

AIP also provides management, editorial and business training, assists members in obtaining legal advice, fair practise and a stable and transparent industry.



Lotfi Madani



Robert Kabushenga



Ingrid Louw



Louise Vale



Nii Laryea Sowah

The African Platform for Access to Information (APAI): a strategy for building an informed citizenry and combating repressive media laws

Alison Meston, from the World Association of Newspapers (WAN), highlighted why access to information laws are needed and some of the difficulties surrounding them:

- The first right to information law was enacted in 1766 in Sweden when the public demanded to know what information the king had. By 2010, 82 countries around the world had access to information laws. However, only 10 countries in Africa have access to such laws.
- They are needed for economic and social processes that are free of government control.
- In a study conducted by WAN in Europe, most journalists did not know how to get these documents. Journalists highlighted a lack of toolkits in order to gain access to information.
- The main reasons for journalists not using access to information laws were that there was no certainty of actually getting the information.

Why APAI?

Edetean Ojo of Media Rights Agenda Nigeria explained the history leading up to the establishment of APAI and expressed his hope that AMLF would support APAI.

The process of establishing APAI started two years ago when only five African countries had access to information

laws and as such Africa was lagging behind other continents and regions in this regard. According to Ojo, APAI is essentially seeking to establish clear and comprehensive principles which will guide the promotion and protection of the right of access to information in Africa, by looking at issues of adoption of information laws at national levels as well as effective implementation.

This process has been driven by a group of organisations called the Windhoek +20 campaign, with a working group of 9 member organisations from across the continent, the declaration for which was adopted in Cape Town on 19 September 2011.

Three outcomes that APAI seeks are:

1. The proclamation by the UN General Assembly of September 28, as International Rights Reformation Day, which will raise awareness of the importance of the right of access to information around the world;
2. To get the African Union (AU) at its' summit to similarly adopt 28 September as Africa's Right to Information Day. We are seeking the development and adoption by the AU of a legally binding instrument on access to information in Africa, such that even in countries where they don't have a national office, the right to access to information will be covered in some ways;
3. Hope that this Forum will endorse

the declaration. We think that such an endorsement would help the planned advocacy initiative at both regional and international levels. These efforts are targeted at the AU and the UN, which we are hoping will recognise the declaration, apply the principles contained in it and proclaim the 28th of September as International Right to Information Day."

Justine Limpitlaw, the author of the Media Law Handbook in South Africa, discussed the existing repressive media laws that undermine access to information and which need to be addressed. Access to information laws are important for a free press, which in turn is needed to ensure democracy.

About existing and repressive media laws

Limpitlaw pointed out that African media law often fails international standards for democratic media freedoms, and focused in her presentation on security related censorship laws.

According to Limpitlaw, a shocking number of countries cling to pre-independence, colonial era security legislation that was used against them in the past and this despite having gained independence. She gave the examples of Zambia's Penal Code which comes from 1930, Lesotho's Sedition proclamation (1938), Botswana's Penal Code (1964) and Malawi's Official Secrets Act (1913).

What do we have to do as Media Leaders?

1. "We have to amend and appeal pre-independence security related censorship legislation. We have to bring this up to date to meet international standards, in line with the so-called Johannesburg principles that were developed for what are legitimate grounds for using security related grounds for prohibiting publication information".

2. "We need to pass access to information legislation in countries where it does not exist. There should be a right of access to information including information held by the private sector, particularly when there are rights involved such as environmental issues or health related issues that could be disclosed through private sector information".
3. "We need administrative justice legislation so that when regulators are dealing with broadcasters or any kind of regulatory issue they are required to act fairly and are required to provide reasons".
4. "We need whistle-blower protection legislation in all countries that includes a measure of protection for the press. Whistle blowers should be able to go directly to the media, so that should be a protected avenue for them".
5. "We need a culture of transparency and accountability, particularly on the part of government".
6. "We need a commitment to public debate and discussion, again, particularly on the part of government."

QUOTES OF NOTE

"As media, we are more vibrant in debating the result of a soccer match but when it comes to issues that affect our operations we don't put up such a vibrant campaign." **Fred M'bembe, The Post, Zambia.**

"What we need is to break it (access to information laws) down to the general public, because otherwise they cannot connect, because they perceive it as technical legalese, which is hard to understand and get your head around. It is not just the right of the media, it's their right too." **Markus Brauckmann, KAS Media Africa.**



Alison Meston



Justine Limpitlaw



Edetean Ojo



Fred M'bembe

Are Journalism Ethics At Risk?

Lessons from the Wikileaks saga and News of the World scandal. What impact on Africa?
What is the ethical impact of social media?

Social media for global good

New social media technologies are creating fresh opportunities to build "global constituencies of online support across national barriers for global good", said **Kate James, chief communications officer for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation** in the final plenary session on ethics and leadership at the AMLF 2011.

James offered an example of the Gates Foundation's partnership with FC Barcelona (FCB) to fight polio. FCB has over 20-million followers on Facebook and the Foundation was able to harness the enthusiasm of the loyal FCB base in support of their anti-polio campaign. Comments came in from over 120 countries.

James said that while social media usage in Africa is still nascent - less than 4% of the population in Africa use Facebook - it is growing exponentially. In the last six months there was a 30% rise in Botswana, a 50% rise in Mozambique and a 140% rise in Chad.

"This holds great opportunity for us as it allows us to participate in conversations that inform our decision making," she said.

The global recession and the decline of revenues in legacy media in the developed world have led to drastic cutbacks. The Washington Post now has only one correspondent to cover the whole of Africa, which means that the opportunity for indigenous media is huge.

"The appetite for African stories is there, evidenced by examples like 'The Nation

Online' achieving a significant increase of traffic coming in from Europe and the US. We are seeing an opportunity for African media to drive the conversation about issues that matter to Africa on the global stage - to connect global decision makers with people on the ground," James said.

"The world should hear the voices of Africa and the issues that matter to Africa. We cannot afford to lose sight of the urgent need to help ensure that millions of small farmers come out of poverty and that through vaccination we are able to give all our children a shot at life," she added.

Leadership guidelines for African media

Dr Christopher Kolade, Pro-chancellor at the Pan-African University in Lagos, reported on a set of leadership and guidelines principles for African media leaders and owners, drafted by a team from the African Media Initiative, AMI. Kolade outlined some of the main principles of the guidelines that include:

- Promotion of the highest standards of corporate governance;
- Building of trust through good performance, accountability and transparency;
- Tailoring of media products towards best public interest;
- Practise of best employer to employee relations;
- Commitment to protecting the interests of media stakeholders.

He said media leaders were "custodians of effective communication in society", and responsible for ensuring that stakeholders in the communication endeavour are empowered to fulfil their roles in managing society's best interests through effective communication.

"To facilitate this process, we must earn the respect, the confidence and the trust of those stakeholders. You can't entrust an important activity to someone whom you don't respect, have confidence in and trust," Kolade said.

"To earn this trust, we need to look at our values and practices. However, both values and standards are sustained only if we have the discipline of making sure we are consistent in what we say, consistent in what we do - and what we do reinforces what we say."

"People who want to support us, will do so more readily if they believe us to be apostles of best practice. If we can adopt these guidelines and implement them faithfully, they constitute the best platform from which we can begin to fight back and resist some of the pressures that we are under," he concluded. The Leadership and Guiding Principles for African Media Leaders and Operators will be rolled out across the continent in partnership with local media associations, as soon as possible.

The state of African Media Ethics

African media ethics face much more serious threats than Twitter and Facebook, said **media lawyer Justine Limpitlaw** in answer to the question "Are journalism ethics at risk?".

The very structure of much of African media is a threat to journalism ethics, good practice and professionalism, because many countries continue to be dominated by state/government broadcasters. The reach of these pro-government state broadcasters is huge and they wield power through the state's adspend.

"Where there are independent, non-state media, they are funded by opposition parties to counter state broadcasters. That's hardly a professional independent source of news," Limpitlaw argued.

There is a lack of genuinely independent broadcasting regulation, and even independent print media is too reliant on government advertising. She suggested that it may be time to ban party political organisations from owning media outlets.

Meanwhile, Limpitlaw argued that social media can and do act as a spur to report "what is really going on". She gave the example of Egyptian journalists working for the state broadcaster, who changed sides just before Mubarak left.

"The journalists said that they just realised that what they were saying was ridiculous and that no one believed it any more. They realised that if they really wanted to be journalists, they needed to start doing their job properly. They started broadcasting stories that would never previously have seen the light of day on Egyptian television."

Broadcasters are beginning to use on-the-ground citizen journalists. The raw footage is critical in bringing about a sea of change. The unsophisticated propaganda role of state media is becoming a thing of the past in Africa because of the impact of social media.



Kate James



Dr Christopher kolade



Limpitlaw said Wikileaks shows how "pointless, irrelevant and unnecessary so many state security and classification laws are".

"If Wikileaks represented the single biggest release of classified information in the history of the news media, did democracy crumble? Did countries fall? In fact, what happened is that a lot of people got insight into some straight talking from their governments and diplomats which they found refreshing, which they found made sense. They felt their governments had more intelligence than they had given them credit for."

"There are dangers, though. Wikileaks publishing the names of informants in Afghanistan and Pakistan is potentially very serious. We need journalists to mediate that flow of information so there must be protection.

The News of the World phone hacking scandal teaches us that ethics is not some kind of "bolt-on luxury item", said **Charlie Beckett from the London School of Economics** during the "Are journalism ethics at risk?" plenary session.

As Rupert Murdoch learned, to his cost, in being forced to close down Britain's most profitable and popular newspaper, "ethics is part of the business model", Beckett said. "In the past, journalists relied on regulation and ethical codes to police what they did - but this isn't remotely enough especially in the digital environment, in a situation where mainstream media is increasingly mixed up with social media."

Beckett said he would avoid the question of whether Twitter is journalism or not: "It's a waste of time. The fact is that news is broken on Twitter, news is reported on Twitter and people

pass on news on Twitter. It is intimately part of the world of journalism and it demands of us that we move from a traditional ethical environment to an ecology of trust," Becket said.

"We are in an age of relative abundance, relative diversity and a highly competitive environment where media is now all based on whether you can get people's attention. How do you get attention on Facebook? It's by people trusting you - your friend 'likes' what you say and they therefore pass that on. Also, people act as your watchdog. So when journalism is on these networks, to get attention it has to be trusted."

"In the new online environment, there has to be a new set of ethics in addition to all the traditional ethics that I cling to - old fashioned ideas like accuracy, professional standards, and quickness."

"Firstly, you have to be transparent; you have to show your source (which could be as simple as putting a hyperlink in). Second, you have to be interactive. People should feel they are allowed to comment on/ respond to what you are doing. Third, you have to be participatory: you have to be open; the audience are not just the subject of what you create, they have to be engaged very directly."

The Guardian now publishes its morning news list online. Readers can see what The Guardian thinks is important, so that they can contribute. If you don't act editorially in this way, somebody else will. That could be someone like Julian Assange, the founder of Wikileaks. For Beckett, Wikileaks "created the biggest act of journalism in journalism history".

"It revealed important secrets that were deeply hidden - and in that sense it challenged power in a way that mainstream media has not been able to do. So, whatever you think of Wikileaks judgementally, you certainly have to realise that it makes us think again about journalism ethics.

"Complexity and uncertainty are good news if you believe in the vital importance of journalism. In this increasing abundance of information, what do people want? They desperately want help in filtering and understanding this information. You need to package it in a way that is understandable.

They want information, above all, that they can trust. That, for me, is the core mission of journalism. I would argue that this journalism needs to be networked and it needs to have networked ethics if it is going to succeed.



ONE-ON-ONE at AMLF 2011

AMLF Offered Private One-on-One Consultations with Publishing Expert

An exciting feature at the AMLF 2011 was the offer of six private, one-on-one problem solving clinics with a senior expert from the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers. (WAN-IFRA).

The expert, **Olivier Bourgeois is CEO of WAN-IFRA South-West Europe and also president of the Society of News Design, France (SND)** has worked for more than 20 years in the media. He works with the most well known French language newspapers, including Le Monde, Le Figaro and L'Express.

Bourgeois speaks at conferences all over the world. He is an expert on reorganisation, business development and new media projects. He conducted counseling sessions on the following broad areas for print media houses:

- Revenue and business models for media
- Digital transition & strategies for the near to mid-term future
- Newsroom management, including convergence, streamlining and other issues.

The clinics were offered to those facing the most pressing challenges or issues and who demonstrated convincing determination to address the problems in a tangible way.

Research Advice Offered

One-on-one media research advisory sessions were also offered by Research Bureau International and Freshly Ground Insights.



Olivier Bourgeois,
WAN-IFRA