



AFRICAN MEDIA BAROMETER

The first home grown analysis of the
media landscape in Africa

NIGERIA 2011



AFRICAN
MEDIA
BAROMETER

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The African Media Barometer (AMB)

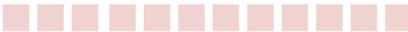
The African Media Barometer (AMB) is an in-depth and comprehensive description and measurement system for national media environments on the African continent. Unlike other press surveys or media indices the AMB is a self-assessment exercise based on home-grown criteria derived from African Protocols and Declarations like the “*Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa*” (2002) by the “African Commission for Human and Peoples’ Rights”. The instrument was jointly developed by *fesmedia Africa*, the Media Project of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in Africa, and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) in 2004.

The African Media Barometer is an analytical exercise to measure the media situation in a given country which at the same time serves as a practical lobbying tool for media reform. Its results are presented to the public of the respective country to push for an improvement of the media situation using the AU Declaration and other African standards as benchmarks. The recommendations of the AMB-reports are then integrated into the work of the 19 country offices of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in sub-Saharan Africa and into the advocacy efforts of other local media organizations like the Media Institute of Southern Africa.

Methodology and Scoring System

Every two to three years a panel of 10-12 experts, consisting of at least five media practitioners and five representatives from civil society, meets to assess the media situation in their own country. For 1 1/2 days they discuss the national media environment according to 45 predetermined indicators. The discussion and scoring is moderated by an independent consultant who also edits the AMB-report.

After the discussion of one indicator panel members allocate their individual scores to that respective indicator in an anonymous vote according to the following scale:

1	Country does not meet indicator	
2	Country meets only a few aspects of indicator	
3	Country meets some aspects of indicator	
4	Country meets most aspects of indicator.	
5	Country meets all aspects of the indicator	

The sum of all individual indicator scores will be divided by the number of panel members to determine the average score for each indicator. These average indicator scores are added up to form average sector scores which then make up the overall country score.

Outcome

The final, qualitative report summarizes the general content of the discussion and provides the average score for each indicator plus sector scores and overall country score. In the report panellists are not quoted by name to protect them from possible repercussions. Over time the bi- or tri-annual reports are measuring the media development in that particular country and should form the basis for a political discussion on media reform.

In countries where English is not the official language the report is published in a bilingual edition.

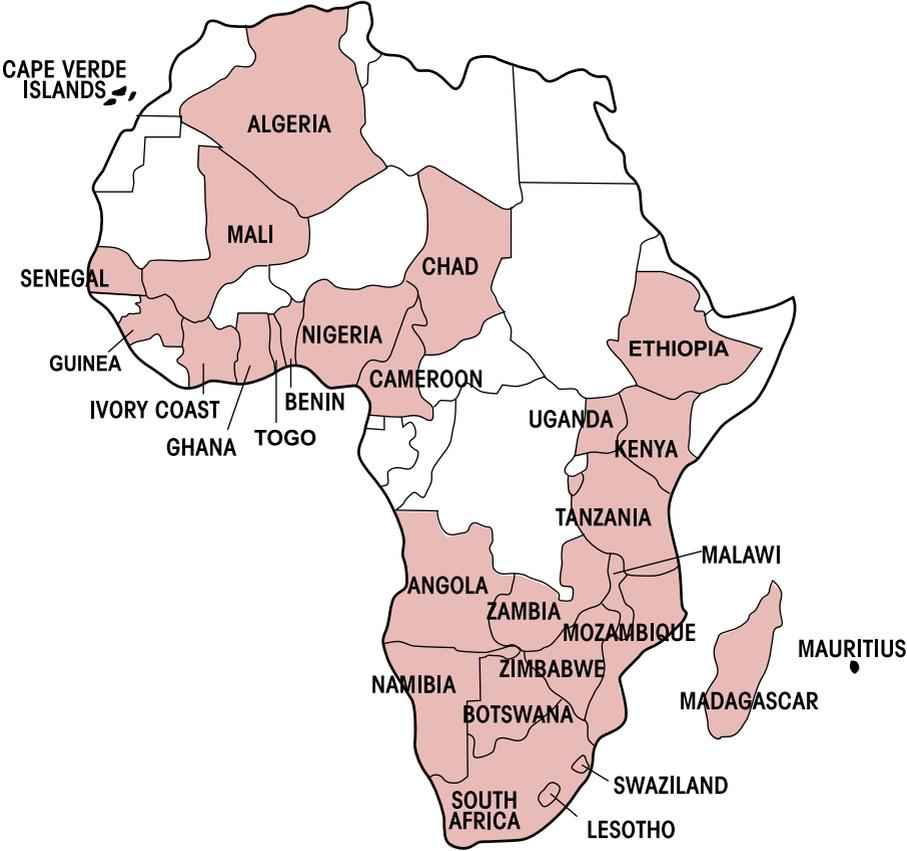
Implementing the African Media Barometer the offices of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) and - in SADC countries the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) - only serve as a convener of the panel and as guarantor of the methodology. The content of the discussion and the report is owned by the panel of local experts and does not represent or reflect the view of FES or MISA.

At the end of 2008 the indicators were reviewed, amended and some new ones were added to address the rapid developments in Information Communication Technology (ICT).

By the end of 2011 the African Media Barometer has been held in 28 African countries, in some of them already for the fourth time.

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See above 28 AMB Countries (2005-2011)

AFRICAN MEDIA BAROMETER NIGERIA 2011

Summary

Nigeria's media has always been vibrant, with a steadfast commitment by journalists and other media professionals. Since the last Nigeria African Media Barometer (AMB) in 2008, there are a number of indicators that suggest that sustained effort is being made towards the preservation of these core values. The institution of the Ombudsman, which was established in 2009 by the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria [NPAN], is an initiative that underscores the desire by media professionals and proprietors to bring a greater sense of professionalism. By voluntarily choosing to submit the media to public scrutiny through the complaints received by the institution, the media is bringing accountability within its own ranks.

There are equally bright prospects for the media following the steady entrenchment of the newfound democratic culture in Africa's most populous nation. Government attitude towards the media has changed positively with a marked departure from the highhandedness of the past, to the use of legal recourse, when and if necessary, to check any excesses of the media. The 2009 decision by the late President Umaru Musa Yar Adua, to take *Leadership* Newspaper to court for a report he considered defamatory, is greeted within media circles as a positive 'First', because the natural reaction would simply have been to suspend or close the media house. This democratic environment is also promoting the emergence of new legislation that is media friendly. The passage of the Freedom of Information Act in 2011 and the Access to Information Act are two pieces of legislation that will make a tremendous impact on the development of the media and freedom of expression.

However, in spite of these positive changes there are a series of relatively new trends that could seriously undermine the development of the media in Nigeria, which has the reputation of being one of Africa's most robust media power houses.

Working conditions for journalists in both state and privately-owned media organisations are simply deplorable. Not only are salaries very low, but they are also paid intermittently, with a cross section of private media journalists being owed arrears of up to ten months. Corruption is eating deep into the fabric of the Nigerian media, and is unfortunately condoned by media proprietors, who sometimes encourage reporters to extort money from news sources in lieu of salaries. The situation is so bad that a panellist summed it by saying: "the integrity of the media is on trial." Nigeria also occupies the unenviable dark spot of a country where harassment of journalists is still common and where journalists still have to pay the ultimate price – being assassinated in the exercise of their

duties. The fact that the perpetrators of the 2008 murders of Abayomi Ogundeji and Godwin Agbaroko of *THISDAY* newspaper and the 2009 murder of *The Guardian's* Bayo Ohu have not been tracked down and brought to justice, is extremely worrisome for media professionals. With the perpetual fear of losing a job or of being kidnapped or killed, Nigerian journalists seem to have found a comfort zone called self-censorship.

There is consensus among experts with a keen attention on Nigeria that the country's media currently stands at a tipping point. How the positive and negative forces identified above eventually play out is left to be seen. Many agree though, that the welfare of journalists is critical to the direction the media will ultimately take, for better or worse.

SECTOR 1:

Freedom of expression, including freedom of the media, is effectively protected and promoted.

1.2 The right to freedom of expression is practised and citizens, including journalists, are asserting their rights without fear.

Nigeria has a vibrant press with government-run and privately-owned media outlets vigorously trying to outperform each other for audience and advertising revenue. The private press has improved over the years, and attempts to match international standards in terms of quality of production. With the advent of democracy, journalists and citizens have also become more daring and vocal in expressing their views. Even Federal and State-run news outlets now make an effort to air the opinions of all parties during political campaigns, albeit with much difficulty.

New media, especially social media, have given citizens more voice. The Internet (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube) and mobile phone text messaging were used extensively during the 2011 elections to share information and opinions about the polls with comparatively less fear than in past elections. Radio stations are also beginning to popularise call-in programmes, which give members of the public the opportunity to air their views.

“...most media outlets are owned by politicians, and journalists are often forced to comply with their dictates”.

“...people are yet to see themselves as free citizens”.

It can be said that journalists in Nigeria take advantage of the rights and freedoms granted to them by the constitution, but this is often not without fear. “Public officials, media owners and interest groups like advertisers, often interfere with the work of journalists through threats, harassment, abductions and even assassinations,” according to a panellist. Another panellist added that “most media outlets are owned by politicians, and journalists are often forced to comply with their dictates”. It is common for a public official or advertiser to put pressure on a media owner to sack a reporter because of a negative report. Many are thus forced to practice self-censorship, both for their personal safety and job security.

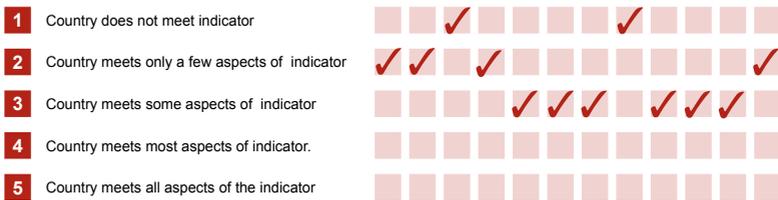
Additionally, journalists lack basic insurance coverage and are often unwilling to take risks.

The highly sensitive nature of the Nigerian public, particularly to religious and ethnic issues, also means that journalists are unable to report every story, for fear of provoking angry reactions. The Miss World crisis of 2002 and the recurrent religious clashes continue to haunt the Nigerian media and public in 2011. According to Nigerian Red Cross officials, at least 100 people died in the northern city of Kaduna following two days of rioting in protest at the Miss World beauty

contest. The suggestion by a newspaper that the Prophet Mohammed would have probably chosen to marry one of the Miss World contestants if he had witnessed the beauty pageant sparked the protests, which subsequently spread to other cities. One panellist also said that “people are yet to see themselves as free citizens in a democratic society, and continue to suffer from the hangover of decades of military rule characterised by intolerance and brutality, which contributed to instilling perpetual fear in citizens.”

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 2.3 (2008 = 2.4)

1.3 There are no laws restricting freedom of expression such as excessive official secret or libel acts, or laws that unreasonably interfere with the responsibilities of media.

The media in Nigeria is unable to fully exercise its role in holding the government and public officials accountable because of several laws that negate freedom of expression. An Official Secrets Act passed in 1962 makes it illegal to disseminate or obtain information considered “classified”. The law is vague about what constitutes classified information and does not state whether or not information becomes declassified at some point. The Act places further restrictions on photographing, sketching or describing a “protected” place, which applies to defence dispositions during a period of emergency.

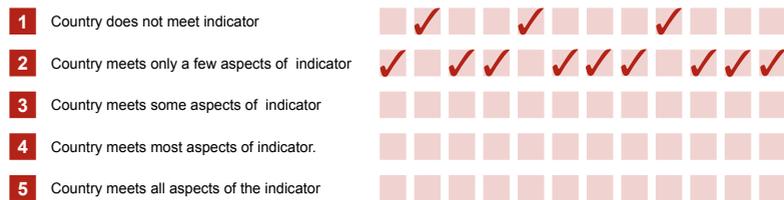
Criminal libel is upheld in Nigeria’s Defamatory and Offensive Publication Act. Under this Act, a member of a security force can arrest a suspect without a warrant, and it prescribes a punishment of up to three months imprisonment and/or a fine of N100 (US\$ 0.60). The court may also order the confiscation of equipment and recorded material.

Some laws that infringe on freedom of expression have been invalidated by the courts but are often still invoked by the government and public officials. For example, a panellist cited a case whereby the law on Sedition, which the Appeal Court invalidated in 1985 has been repeatedly invoked when the government finds itself under attack. He pointed out that in 2006, it was used in a suit against *AIT (African Independent Television)*, privately owned television station, following the broadcast of a programme about the purchase of a presidential plane that turned out to be defective. Authorities said that the discussion was capable of bringing the government into disrepute.

Acts establishing public broadcasting and the regulation of the broadcasting sector give several powers to the Minister of Information, who can use them to control programme content, particularly of state-owned broadcasters.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

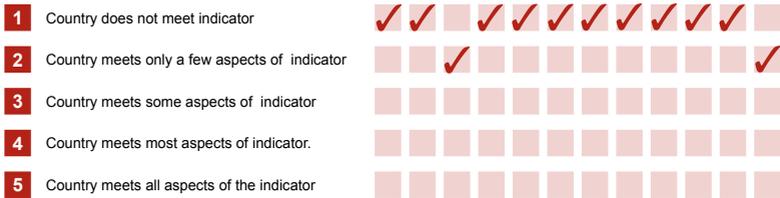
1.8 (2008 = 1.5)

1.4 Government makes every effort to honour regional and international instruments on freedom of expression and the media.

Nigeria has only made minimal effort in respecting regional and international protocols and conventions on freedom of expression and of the media. The little that has been done, is the result of advocacy and pressure from the civil society. According to some panellists, the government appears to feel threatened by instruments that seek to strengthen freedom of expression and the media. In many respects, the government has tightened its grip on the media, particularly state-owned radio and TV stations, and is resistant to recommendations to transform them into truly public service broadcasters. Advocacy for the promotion of community radio has been ongoing for nine years, but as of June 2011, not a single community radio station had been licensed in Nigeria, except for the campus radio stations, which operate at some universities.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 1.2 (2008 = n/a)

1.5 Print publications are not required to obtain permission to publish from state authorities.

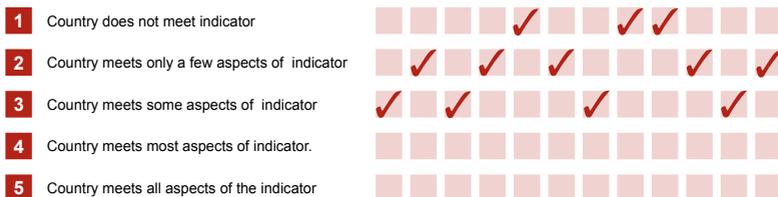
“...the board has been set up mainly to ensure full control over the content of publications.”

Authorisation is required for print publications to be considered legal in Nigeria. Newspapers generally obtain licences from either the Federal or State governments, while publishers of books are required to obtain an ISBN number from the National and State libraries. Some states insist on receiving a draft of the publication before issuing an ISBN number. In the state of Kano, a board has been set up to look through print material before it is published. According to one panellist, “the board has been set up mainly to ensure full control over the content of publications.” In Lagos State, authorities require new publishers to submit a dummy copy of their newspaper or magazine before the publication is launched.

But panellists said many publishers generally ignore the licence requirements and go ahead to publish. They carry on unperturbed with their business until they commit an “offence”, and the noncompliance is then used against them.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.1 (2008 = n/a)

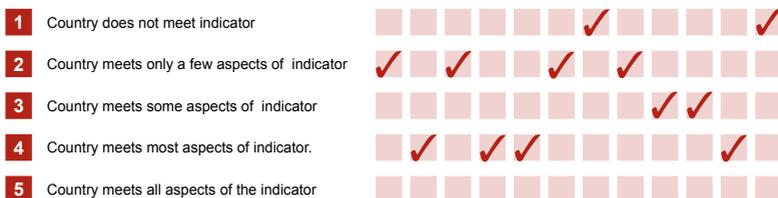
1.6 Entry into and practice of the journalistic profession is legally unrestricted.

It is generally easy to become a journalist and to practice in Nigeria. However, the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) is making attempts to regulate entry into the profession with the introduction of requirements such as minimum formal qualifications, arguing that it is important in order to guarantee professionalism.

In 2010, the government was forced to seek appeal after a high court rendered null and void the Press Council Act, an instrument which among other things sets conditions for becoming a journalist. Currently, minimum requirements for recruitment are at the discretion of publishers. The result, in the opinion of the majority of the members of the panel, has been an influx of what has been referred to as “quack journalists” into the profession.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.7 (2008 = 3.4)

1.7 Confidential sources of information are protected by law and/or the courts.

Nothing in Nigeria's media laws gives journalists the right or privilege to conceal their sources. Nonetheless, two Appeal Court rulings in favour of the protection of journalists' sources have given legal backing to the protection of sources. One panellist cited the example of the the Senate vs. Tony Momoh case, in which the Appeal court said the fundamental right of the journalist must be upheld.

Other panellists believe that the passing of the Freedom to Information Act (FIA) in 2011 would ease the protection of sources by journalists. The FIA promises to protect public officials from the adverse consequences of releasing certain categories of information.

Scores:

Individual scores:

1	Country does not meet indicator	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓							
2	Country meets only a few aspects of indicator		✓		✓		✓						✓	
3	Country meets some aspects of indicator				✓									✓
4	Country meets most aspects of indicator.												✓	
5	Country meets all aspects of the indicator													

Average score:

1.9 (2008 = 1.1)

1.8 Public information is easily accessible, guaranteed by law, to all citizens.

Nigeria passed its first Freedom of Information Act in May 2011, in what is considered within media circles across the continent as a groundbreaking move.

The Act came as a result of many years of advocacy by civil society groups and media-based associations such as the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), Newspaper Proprietors' Association of Nigeria (NPAN) and the Nigerian Guild of Editors. The introductory note of the Bill tabled before parliament states that the purpose of the act is to make "public records and information more freely available, provide for public access to public records and information, protect public records and information to the extent consistent with the public interest and the protection of personal privacy, protect serving public officers from

1.11 Civil society in general and media lobby groups actively advance the cause of media freedom.

Nigeria's new Freedom of Information Act is one example that best illustrates the role played by media organisations and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in shaping the country's media landscape. Advocacy for media freedom, led by civil society, has been felt in the country over the past 11 years, following Nigeria's return to civilian rule. Civil society groups have been at the forefront of initiatives aimed at the repeal of repressive laws and the introduction of new legislation that guarantees greater freedoms through public awareness building, advocacy and stakeholder lobbying activities. Though implementation has been slow, there have been initiatives such as the Media Rights Agenda, a proposed bill to revise the broadcasting regulation, efforts to amend laws that infringe on free speech and freedom of expression, and advocacy for the development of community radio.

The Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), which has members throughout the country, is the umbrella body that caters for the welfare of all journalists. It is currently in the process of reforming itself from a trade union to a professional association. The Union runs an insurance scheme for journalists and has come out with a journalists' salary scale, which it hopes media owners will implement.

There was consensus among panellists that the NUJ is often at the forefront of defending the interests of journalists, especially when they come under attack. For instance, regional chapters have boycotted the coverage of some State Houses to protest the arrest and abuse of journalists.

International organisations such as Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Reporters Without Borders, Committee to Protect Journalists, International Centre for Journalists, and the International Federation of Journalists, amongst others, are actively involved in defending the cause of journalism in Nigeria by exposing and denouncing abuse, providing training and spearheading advocacy for a freer media.

SECTOR 2:

The media landscape, including new media, is characterised by diversity, independence and sustainability.

The media landscape, including new media, is characterised by diversity, independence and sustainability.

2.1 A wide range of sources of information (print, broadcasting, Internet) is available and affordable to citizens.

A wide spectrum of media platforms are available to Nigerians, even though access may be restricted by cost, technology, circulation and other factors such as lack of electricity in some parts of the country.

As far as the print media is concerned, Nigeria has a flourishing newspaper industry, with about 20 to 25 national dailies and weeklies and a multiplicity of regional publications at the level of each of the 36 States of the Federation. Circulation has, however, dwindled over the years for economic reasons. While urban centres are awash with the day's papers, newspapers hardly reach rural readers and when they do, it is often several days after the publication date. Publishers find no incentive in incurring extra costs of pushing circulation into the rural areas, where the market is largely nonexistent. Most have adopted "strategic marketing" techniques like targeting hotels, airports and offices.

On average, newspapers cost US\$1 and magazines cost about US\$2. These prices are generally considered expensive for the ordinary Nigerian.

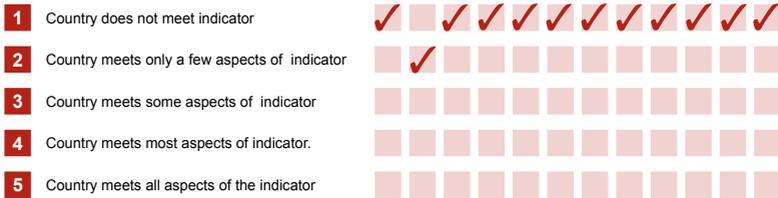
In broadcasting, the number of radio stations in Nigeria has been growing rapidly. There are an estimated 192 radio stations in the country, with more stations springing up in cities, towns and on school campuses.

Radio is considered the medium with the widest reach. Through cheap battery-powered transistor radio sets, residents in the most remote parts of the country are able to stay connected to what is going on, and can even participate in programming.

Dozens of free-to-air television stations broadcast across Nigeria. The cost of television sets has been on a steady decline, but remains largely unaffordable to the vast majority of poor Nigerians. In addition, panellists said except for the main public networks, TV signals are also usually weak, leaving swaths of the country underserved or in complete blackout. Frequent power outages mean that even those with access to TV signals often spend weeks without watching television.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 1.1 (2008 = 1.1)

2.5 Adequate competition legislation/regulation seeks to prevent media concentration and monopolies.

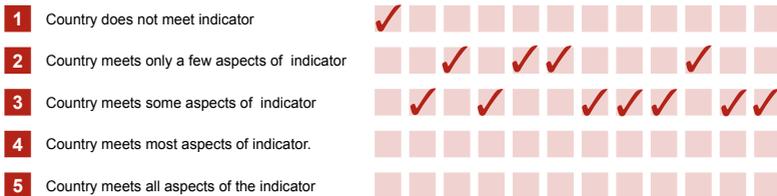
...there is strong competition in the Nigerian media market place, but “it is between few key players.”

Under the National Broadcasting Commission Decree (Section 9.5), it is “illegal for any person to have controlling shares in more than two television stations.” Beyond that, there is literally an open field for media monopolies and cross-ownership in Nigeria, which has led to media concentration in the hands of a few, usually powerful politicians. A former governor of Lagos state, for instance, owns *TV Continental*, *Radio Continental* and *Adaba FM*, as well as *The Nation* and the *National Life* newspapers. Business mogul Jimoh Ibrahim owns *National Mirror*, *Daily Sketch* and has just recently acquired *News Watch*. Nonetheless, there

is strong competition in the Nigerian media market place, but “it is between few key players.”

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.5 (2008 = n/a)

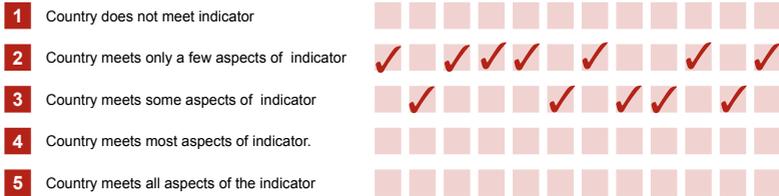
2.7 All media fairly reflect the voices of both women and men.

There is increasing awareness in the Nigerian media of the need to give women a voice. Women are increasingly being sought for interviews, and the number of specialised programmes and reports that depict women in a negative way are steadily decreasing. But many obstacles, including social, cultural, religious and even political stereotypes still stand in the way of real progress in gender mainstreaming in the Nigerian media. As it emerged from the 2011 elections, women running for public office often get less coverage than their male counterparts or opponents. Rampant “cash and carry” journalism (a reference to reporting that is conditioned and driven by the amount of money paid by a news source or an interested party in a story to the reporter on the beat to distort or kill the story) also means that women who are generally less financially well to do are consequently less attractive as news sources compared to their rich male counterparts. Panellists pointed out women’s voices have also been weakened by the attitude of women themselves, as few are outgoing and/or willing to stand under media scrutiny. “The media do not sit down and decide to relegate women. Women simply do not want to talk,” said one panellist.

“The media do not sit down and decide to relegate women.”

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.4 (2008 = n/a)

2.9 The country has a coherent ICT policy, which aims to meet the information needs of all citizens, including marginalised communities.

The Nigerian government has taken steps to sync with a rapidly evolving information and communication technology (ICT) sector. Several government agencies such as the Nigerian Communication Commission, the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission and the National Information Technology Development Agency were created over the past years to promote and regulate the sector. This was followed by initiatives to accelerate broadband access through the deployment of fibre optic cables, a plan to ensure universal access to ICT services, the announcement of a computer for all project, and a bold plan to digitalise Nigeria's public administration.

“People in the rural areas are left to depend on informal sources for information, such as town criers, rumour and gossip.”

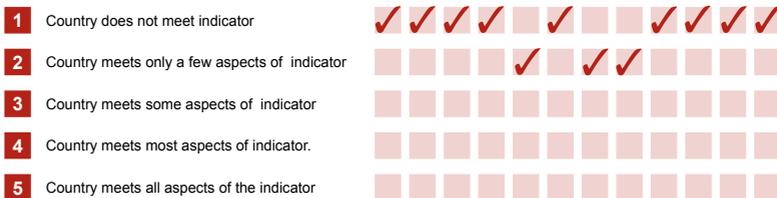
But meaningful progress is hampered by the lack of a comprehensive ICT policy and inconsistencies in the implementation of existing initiatives. Even though the Communication and Information Ministries have now been merged, the government is yet to deliver on a promise to fuse all existing ICT regulatory agencies. Major initiatives such as plans to digitalise the public administration and pursue a computer for all policy have been similarly delayed.

In spite of the proliferation of technologies and services, most Nigerians are yet to take full advantage of ICTs. Up to 70 percent of the country's approximately 150 million citizens live in rural communities where ICT access is weakest as a result of

undeveloped infrastructure and high costs. Ten years ago, the government initiated a national “TV watching” programme in rural areas to reduce the information gap between city dwellers and rural folk. The “TV watching” programme has since collapsed. There is no visible effort on the part of the government to increase ICT access to disadvantaged groups like women, children, people living with disabilities, the uneducated, and rural populations. “People in the rural areas are left to depend on informal sources for information, such as town criers, rumour and gossip” a panellist asserted.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.3 (2008 = n/a)

2.10 Government does not use its power over the placement of advertisements as a means to interfere with editorial content.

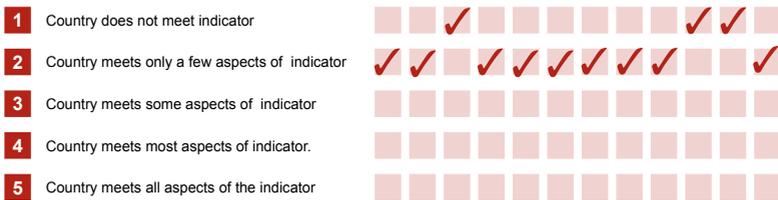
Aided in part by the tough business climate for the media in Nigeria, public officials and politicians have found advertising to be a powerful tool in shaping editorial content to their advantage. By either refusing or granting advertising, government officials often succeed to force the media to promote their agenda. A culture of “retentions”, whereby news outlets receive regular amounts of money from public officials and politicians to undertake “special reporting projects”, makes it difficult for the media to fully play its role of holding public authorities accountable. It is common to find “Special Issues” that run cover-to-cover sweet-coated reports on an official or institution on the stands. “A he-who-pays-the piper-calls-the-tune relationship has thus emerged between public authorities and the media in Nigeria.”

“A he-who-pays-the piper-calls-the-tune relationship has thus emerged between public authorities and the media in Nigeria.”

There have been reports of state officials using their position to block the flow of advertising to “unfriendly” media outlets. For example, in 2009, the Kano state government cancelled more than N30 million (US\$189 408) worth of advertising contracts to Freedom Radio due to the radio station’s “unfriendly” reporting. The contracts were reinstated after Freedom Radio apparently accepted to moderate its tone.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 1.8 (2008 = 1.4)

2.11 The advertising market is large enough to support a diversity of media outlets.

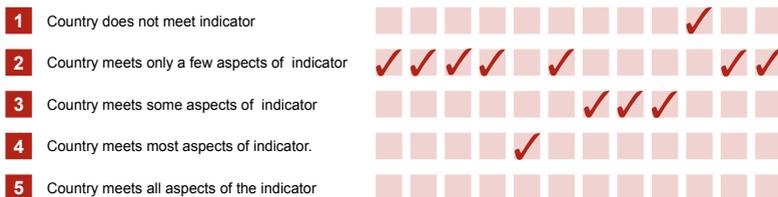
The advertising market in Nigeria is believed to be worth N19 billion (US\$ 119 959 000) and projected to reach N20 billion (US\$ 126 272 000) by the end of 2011. This revenue, which the media shares with billboard and other advertising formats, is widely considered to be insufficient to support Nigeria’s media industry.

With a weak manufacturing sector, the bulk of advertising comes from three sectors: government, telecoms and financial services. In addition to its small size, the advertising market is replete with problems such as low rates, extraordinarily long delays in payment of advertising bills and the unpredictability of advertising campaigns. Barter agreements - a practice whereby media organisations pay for services like travel, hotel accommodation and communication for media personnel with an advertisement, has become standard practice in business transactions. This deprives media houses of the cash needed to finance other important expenses.

With this situation it is not surprising that most media enterprises are in dire straits, with more than 80 percent struggling to pay salaries and other running expenses.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.3 (2008 = 2.6)

Average score for sector 2:

2.1 (2008 = n/a)*

* The indicators were reviewed, changed and shifted in 2009. Therefore the scores of some indicators and sector scores are not comparable to scores of previous AMBs.

SECTOR 3:

Broadcasting regulation is transparent and independent; the state broadcaster is transformed into a truly public broadcaster.

Broadcasting regulation is transparent and independent; the state broadcaster is transformed into a truly public broadcaster.

3.1 Broadcasting legislation has been passed and is implemented that provides for a conducive environment for public, commercial and community broadcasting.

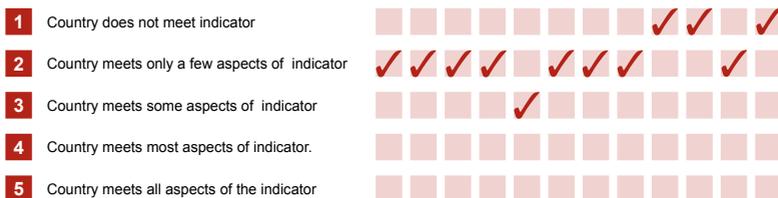
The decree establishing the National Broadcasting Commission is the principal legislation governing the broadcasting sector in Nigeria. Among other duties, the Commission, which dates back to the years of military rule, advises the government on broadcast policy, makes proposals for the issuing of licenses, “regulates and controls” the broadcast industry, and listens to complaints. In spite of the existence of a legislative framework, there are still challenges for the broadcast media to develop.

The Minister of Information remains a powerful official as far as shaping the media sector is concerned. He appoints the chief executives of state-run broadcasting organisations, over which he exerts control. There is no true public service broadcaster in the country since “public” radio and television stations are managed much like parastatals. Commercial broadcasting also faces many difficulties, the most pressing of which are the power of state authorities to issue and withdraw licences, and the high cost of licences fees. In states like Lagos and Abuja, the broadcast licence runs as high as N20 million (US\$ 126 272), with the average for the rest of the country at about N15 million (US\$ 94 704). In addition, broadcasters are required to pay 5% of their annual turnover to the state.

After years of inaction on the issue, the government finally set up a panel to examine the development of community radio in 2006. However, to date, no legislation has been enacted to govern community broadcasting. In a major development, the government gave its approval for community radio to become operational, but not a single licence has been issued to bring this to fruition.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 1.8 (2008 = 2.9)

3.2 Broadcasting is regulated by an independent body adequately protected by law against interference whose board is appointed – in an open way – involving civil society and not dominated by any particular political party.

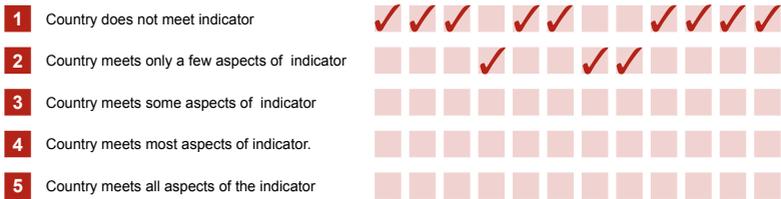
The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) is a body under the authority of the Minister of Information. Section 3 of the Decree establishing the NBC states that members of the commission shall be people of “proven integrity, experience and specialised knowledge in the broadcast industry”. However, the same Section states that their appointment is possible only if they are qualified “in the opinion of the Minister”. Section 4 further gives the President absolute powers over the composition of the Commission by stating that:

“A member of the Commission may be removed from office by the President, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, if he is satisfied that it is not in the interest of the commission or the interest of the public that the member should continue in office.”

Members of the Commission are meant to be drawn from diverse backgrounds, including law, business, performing arts, education, social science, media and public affairs. However, in practice, these are usually civil servants with well-established political leanings, according to panellists. In 2011, the membership of the board was made up mostly of well-known ruling party officials. There is no evidence of open consultation of any kind in the appointment of members of the Commission.

Scores:

Individual scores:



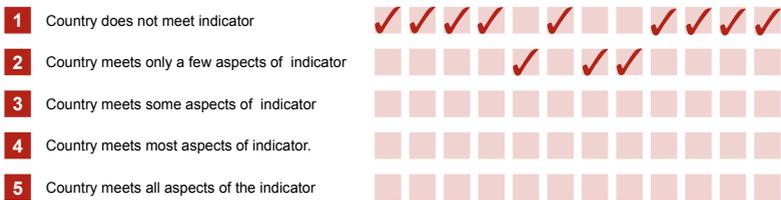
Average score: 1.3 (2008 = n/a)

3.3 The body regulates broadcasting services and licences in the public interest and ensures fairness and a diversity of views broadly representing society at large.

The Nigerian Broadcasting Commission has no authority in matters of issuing of licences, as its role is limited to receiving and processing applications, and then forwarding them to the Head of State to make a final choice. The NBC’s independence is also seriously compromised because its decree empowers the Minister of Information to give the Commission directives. By law, the issuing of licences should be based on the availability of frequencies, but panellists pointed out that the process is often viewed as one-sided and serving the interest of public authorities instead. For example, before leaving office, former President Olusegun Obasanjo allegedly allocated himself 5 to 10 radio and television broadcasting licences.

Scores:

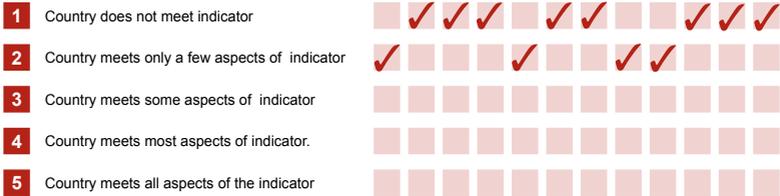
Individual scores:



Average score: 1.3 (2008 = 1.8)

Scores:

Individual scores:



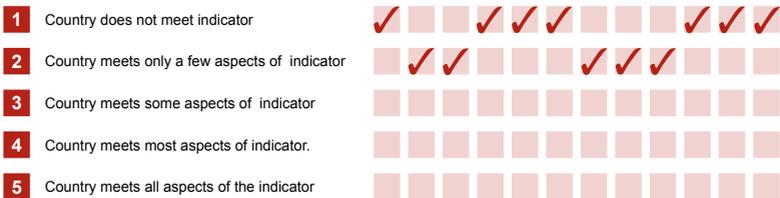
Average score: 1.3 (2008 = 1.2)

3.6 The editorial independence of the state/public broadcaster from political influence is guaranteed by law and practised.

State or public broadcasters are under the authority of the Minister of Information, who is empowered to give them general directives. Because the state/public media exists to promote government action, reporting on government action and public officials is obligatory and often takes precedence over other more newsworthy events. During the 2011 Senate election in Anambra State for instance, the returning officer resigned, complaining that he was under pressure to rig the vote in which the sitting governor was contesting. After running the story along with other news outlets, the state-owned RNN was forced to take the report off the air and broadcast a disclaimer every 30 minutes. The editor was redeployed as punishment for allowing the report to go on air.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 1.4 (2008 = n/a)

3.7 The state/public broadcaster is adequately funded in a manner that protects it from arbitrary interference through its budget and from commercial pressure.

Public authorities, including the Federal and State governments, generally provide subvention to state broadcasters in the form of the payment of employees' salaries and other overhead costs. The total amount of state subvention is around N22 million (US\$ 138 899) annually. But this amount is insufficient and stations have to cope with long delays before the disbursement of funds. Local stations that belong to the national network of the state broadcaster are also required to generate additional income through advertising. As a result of insufficient state-funding, state broadcasters are engaged in "a mad rush" for advertisement with significant consequences on programme content and the use of prime time. Local stations keep a chunk of the advertising revenue, which they generate for their operational expenses, while 7% is paid into the coffers of their organisation.

Scores:

Individual scores:

1	Country does not meet indicator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Country meets only a few aspects of indicator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Country meets some aspects of indicator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Country meets most aspects of indicator.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
5	Country meets all aspects of the indicator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						

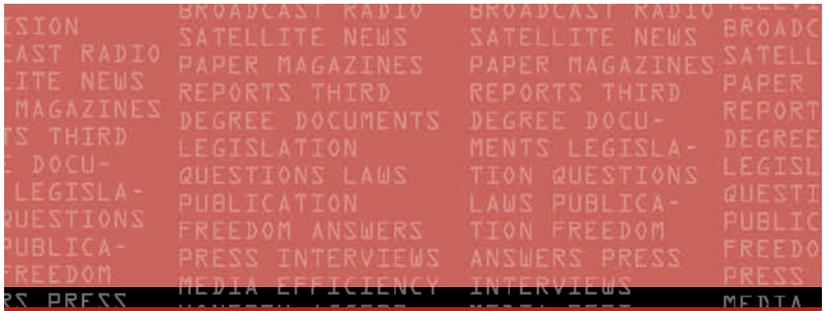
Average score:

1.9 (2008 = n/a)

3.8 The state/public broadcaster is technically accessible in the entire country.

In addition to the Federal networks, each Nigerian state runs its own broadcasting outlet. However, the technical quality of these stations' signal is usually poor, leaving many parts of the country with limited coverage. In the big cities, some stations are unable to reach everyone, and cover only half the population. Remote border towns

"...many are forced to follow radio and television programmes from neighbouring countries like Cameroon."



SECTOR 4:

The media practise high levels of professional standards.



The media practise high levels of professional standards.

4.1 The media follow voluntary codes of professional standards, which are enforced by self-regulatory bodies that deal with complaints from the public.

Since 2008, there have been significant developments in the standard of journalism, although various problems remain.

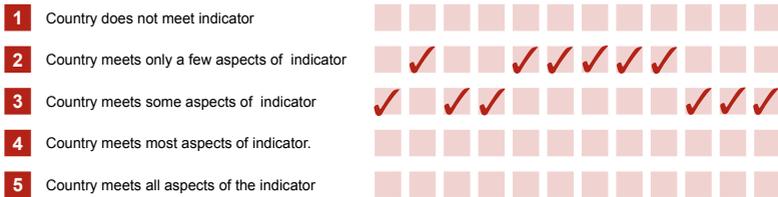
The Newspaper Proprietor's Association, supported by the Editors' Guild, appointed an Ombudsman in 2009. This presents a major step in improving the quality, ethics and standards of journalism in the country. Unfortunately, the public is not yet sufficiently informed about the existence of the institution; as such relatively few complaints have been received from the public so far. Newspapers are taking steps to educate their employees and the public on issues of ethics. Some of them publish excerpts from the Code of Conduct in their newspapers regularly. Media Trust Co., the owner of *Daily Trust*, *Weekly Trust* and *Sunday Trust*, has a zero tolerance to bribery and corruption of staff. The company's "No Thanks" policy consists of publishing a 'NO THANKS' section in the newspaper that clearly states that its staff is paid salaries and gratification, and should therefore not be given a Naira by any person. It further invites anyone from whom any of the newspaper's reporters asks for any financial compensation, to report such reporter to the management of the newspaper. The state media have also developed internal codes.

The Nigerian Press Council, an initiative of the government, is a highly controversial body. It is a government-appointed board to regulate the media sector and to listen to complaints. It is placed under the authority of the Minister of Information, and has little respect within the media.

In spite of efforts spearheaded by both the government and the industry to uphold professional standards, the response from the vast majority of media owners and journalists has not been strong. Poor and irregular wages has made compliance with existing ethical codes difficult. Some media owners believe the professional card is a pass for reporters to raise money through tips and bribes.

Scores:

Individual scores:



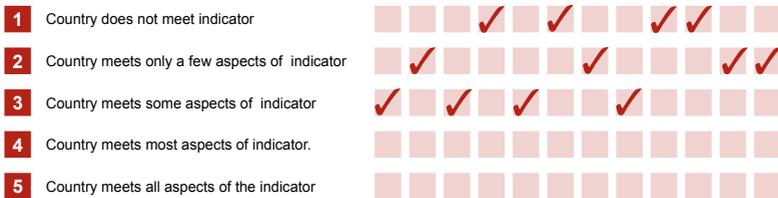
Average score: 2.5 (2008 = n/a)

4.5 Journalists and editors do not practise self-censorship.

Often faced with threats and pressures from media owners, politicians, advertisers, and even armed groups, Nigerian journalists and editors have found safety in self-censorship. Journalists are aware that running or investigating certain stories could result in them losing their jobs. Newsrooms sometimes “kill” stories because they are sensitive to certain interests that are closely linked to the publication, such as advertisers and political ‘godfathers’ (a code word for political patrons), it emerged from discussions. Journalists covering government institutions are careful not to lose their accreditation, which is a standard practice when an official gets uncomfortable with the reporting of a particular journalist. The fear of losing perks such as monthly stipends for covering State houses, and the use of free facilities such as the telephone, fax and internet access for filing their stories also forces journalists to practice self-censorship.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 2.0 (2008 = 1.3)

“...the Nigerian media is corrupt and its integrity is on trial.”

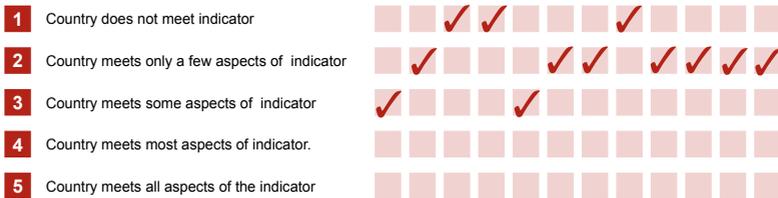
for media houses to demand “fuel” or “transport money” to cover news events. Unable to pay salaries, some media owners encourage journalists to extort money from news sources in lieu of salaries. The situation is so bad that a panellist summed it thus: “the Nigerian media is corrupt and its integrity is on trial.”

While this is a true picture of the level of corruption within media circles, panellists were also quick to point out that this is a reflection of a vice that has eaten deep into the much larger Nigerian society, where people have generally developed a taste for a life of opulence, and are ready to do just anything to attain it.

There are a few exceptions to the rule, however, and a handful of journalists are well-known to be incorruptible.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 1.9 (2008 = n/a)

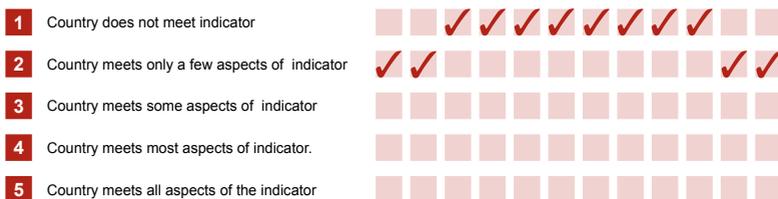
4.8 Salary levels and general working conditions for journalists and other media practitioners are adequate.

Across the industry, working conditions for Nigerian journalists and other media professionals are poor. Salaries are low, irregular and in some cases, inexistent. This is not only true of private media organisations. Even journalists of state-owned media are underpaid and complain of a lack of career prospects. Many workers in the state-media are also recruited as casual staff and work under even more pathetic conditions. Because of large variations, it is difficult to know what the average pay across the industry is. Entry level salaries range from about N23 254 (US \$150) for state media to about N 46 509 (US \$300) for the private media.

Poor working conditions are generally blamed for the rampant corruption in the media. “The system has created the environment for journalists to be corrupt,” said one panellist. Journalists and NGOs have been advocating better working conditions in the industry for years. State media journalists go on strike often to demand better pay and the “monetisation” of benefits such as housing.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.3 (2008 = n/a)

4.9 Media professionals have access to training facilities offering formal qualification programmes as well as opportunities to upgrade skills.

Almost all the major state and private universities, as well as the polytechnics, have journalism departments which attract tens of thousands of students every year. An increasing number of privately run post-secondary institutions also offer formal journalism training across the country. With the advent of the Internet, distance learning and online training has also become more accessible.

Journalists also have numerous opportunities for on-the-job training both at home and abroad. Media houses run in-house training and mentoring programmes.

Some, like the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) and the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) run well-established training institutions, primarily for in-house training of their staff. They are, however, increasingly taking in journalists from other newsrooms. Some journalists are enrolled in schools as part-time students. NGOs also conduct regular training workshops for working journalists, who also have numerous opportunities to grow their experience through seminars, workshops and fellowships. So many opportunities abound, that one panellist believed that “it is difficult to find a journalist who has worked for four years without undergoing some kind of training.”

What were the developments in the media environment in the last two / three years?

Positive Developments

- The passing of the Freedom of Information Act in 2011 is arguably the most important positive development in Nigeria's media environment. It guarantees the citizen's right to public information, obliging public officials to keep public records and to provide requested information within seven days (renewable for another seven days). The Act also criminalises the destruction of public records.
- Nigerian newspaper owners appointed an ombudsman in 2009 to control and regulate the practice of journalism. The Ombudsman also takes complaints from the public.
- The Nigerian Union of Journalists launched an insurance scheme for journalists in 2009. For a policy, costing N6750 (US\$ 42) per year for NUJ-registered journalists, the insurance covers Temporary Total Disability at N750 000 (US\$ 4 735), Permanent Disability at N1.5 million (US\$ 9,470) and death at N3 million (US\$ 18 940). Some state governors are reported to have paid such insurances for all journalists working within their states.
- The voice of the media has grown stronger, and public authorities' respect for the media has increased. The state broadcasters NTA and Radio Nigeria played a more "positive" role in election reporting.
- Appropriation of technology by most journalists is aiding the development of the profession. In spite of hardships, more journalists work with gadgets like recorders, laptops and ipads.
- The government took steps to diversify media outlets. After an official go-ahead, the delivery of the first private radio and television network and community radio licences are in process. Licences were issued to open on-campus broadcasting stations with around 18 operating in 2009, up from 8 in 2008.
- The relationship between the government and the media has improved considerably. Clampdown on the media witnessed a significant drop, and public authorities made efforts to follow due process in dealing with press "offenses". For the first time, the president took journalists to court in 2009 and 2010, instead of resorting to arbitrary closure. The court struck out the case, since the president, who enjoyed immunity, could not be cross-examined.

Negative Developments

- Journalists remained a major target of violence, with some being either assassinated or kidnapped. The police did little to unravel the mystery surrounding the assassination of three journalists on the same day in April 2010.
- The welfare of journalists is still deplorable. There are still no Collective Bargain Agreements in the sector and journalists continue to receive very low pay. Many journalists have gone for many months without pay. Journalists of some private media were owed up to ten months' in salary arrears.
- A huge gap continues to exist between the quality of formal training, and industry-needs. Journalism schools were understaffed, underequipped and often failed to meet basic requirements for accreditation.
- Newspapers experienced a continued decline in circulation, resulting from low advertising revenue and the high cost of production. The circulation of the country's leading magazine, News Watch, which used to be about a million when it launched is down to about 40,000. Newspapers, which had individual print-runs of between 500,000 to 800,000 some 10 years ago have struggled with a combined print-run of less than 500,000. Many were unable to sell even 10,000 copies per issue.
- State-owned newspapers such as Chronicles, Nigerian Statesman, and Observer were shut down. Governors and other politicians opened their own media houses to compete with underfunded state media.
- Even though some progress was made in following due process in dealing with media offenses, the government used its overbearing powers to close Channels TV after it reported that late President Yar'Adua was contemplating to resign for health reasons.
- The state broadcaster continued to be generally biased in its reporting for the 2011 elections. It gave more air time to the ruling party and sometimes refused to run paid campaign adverts from opposition parties

What kinds of activities are needed over the next two years?

- Journalists' welfare continues to be the biggest threat to the development of professional journalism in Nigeria. All efforts to provide training and other support to the industry are wasted unless the underlying problems of low pay and poor working conditions are addressed. The panellists agreed that this was an area where urgent action was needed through continued advocacy for better working conditions for journalists.

- Only a few months old, the new Access to information Act is still to be tested. However, it is important to build the capacity of journalists on how to take advantage of the legislation, which could make their work easier and more effective.
- ICTs – and the growth of new media like cell phones and social media platforms – offer alternative outlets that can help journalists overcome the problem of self-censorship, and report stories with more boldness. Given this advantage, it is important to encourage more journalists to make use of the new storytelling tools available.
- Given the important role of public broadcasting, panellists agreed that it is important to educate public authorities on the need to transform state-run broadcasters into veritable public service outlets – which give everyone a voice.
- Panellists recommended that civil society organisations need to maintain and step up the pressure for the transformation of the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission into a truly independent regulatory body.
- Two committees were set up to develop action plans around the most urgent needs, in association with the rest of the panel. They are:
 - (i) The welfare of Journalists
 - (ii) The launch of the Nigeria 2011 African Media Barometer (AMB).

The Panel:

Name	Function
Auwal Babangida	Unionist
Amaechi Anakwue	Journalist
Dr Lydia Umar	Civil Society
Tukur Abdulrahman	Journalist
Miriam Menkiti	Journalist
Emmanuel Anyaegbunam	Civil Society/ Lawyer
Lanre Arogundade	Civil Society
Dr Abigail Ogwezzy-Ndisika	Lecturer /Communication expert
Mazi Anariochi Ezuma	Civil Society
Akin Akingbulu	Media representative
Innocent Azih	Civil Society

Moderator:

Emmanuel Wongibe

Rapporteur:

Eugene N Nforngwa

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