

Bagamoyo Plan of Action

14. To carry out national advocacy actions in order to strengthen the autonomy of media regulatory bodies, while changing Press Laws that are inappropriate or which curtail press freedom, while also decriminalising press offences.

15. To encourage professional associations and NGO's to provide journalists with copies of the different international conventions to which their countries are signatory (e.g. on questions relating to defence and security, economic exchange, the environment, human rights, women and children, environmental protection, etc.) so that they are better able to inform citizens about their rights and to remind the States of the need to respect their commitments.

16. To extend the principle of joint field reporting being tested in Rwanda, Burundi and DRC to journalists from other countries represented at the Bagamoyo meeting, where teams of journalists from different countries work together on issues of common interest, not confined by national borders.

To implement this Plan of Action:

17. To look for common strategies and partnerships with the two multilateral institutions fostering the peace process in the Great Lakes region – the United Nations and the African Union – and with the structures that these institutions have established to support this process.

Adopted in Bagamoyo, December 15, 2004

We, media professionals from Burundi, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zambia, meeting in Bagamoyo from 13 - 15 December 2004, in the presence of representatives of civil society from our respective countries, in the framework of the conference on

Peace Building in the Great Lakes: The Media's Commitment

held under the auspices of the Panos Institute in Paris, with the involvement of the Panos Institutes in East Africa and in Southern Africa

- Resolve after an in-depth analysis of the causes that have led to the chronic state of instability in this part of the African continent, as identified by the International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region;
- Considering the problems faced by the media covering the multi-faceted crisis in the Great Lakes region, and especially those linked to reporting on issues of peace and security, democracy and good governance, as well as economic development and regional integration, humanitarian and social issues, and the environment;
- Adopt, in the spirit of the Bagamoyo Declaration, the following Plan of Action that reflects our commitment to develop concrete actions for peace building with the following priorities:

Immediate actions:

1. To hold national meetings with media professionals and civil society in our respective countries, to present the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration adopted by Heads of State meeting on 20 November, 2004 as part of the International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region, as well as the Bagamoyo Declaration and national and regional Plans of Action adopted here, so as to stimulate debate on the issues and to develop these documents further.

Regional actions:

2. To set up a regional watchdog body run jointly by the media and civil society, to monitor follow-up and implementation of the commitments made by their respective States in the framework of the peace process in the Great Lakes.

3. To create a regional network of journalists sharing the same professional values, committed to promoting peace in the region and able to stimulate joint consultation and training initiatives, as well as drawing attention to pockets of tension that could spring up in their respective environments, thus serving a watchdog and early warning function.

4. To create a network of media correspondents in the various countries and their provinces to disseminate information and media output at regional level.

5. To strengthen existing regional structures (such as OMAC – Central African Media Organisation) and broaden their professional foundations, while making their achievements more widely-known; to widen the scope of OMAC as a press freedom early warning network, led by JED (Journalists in Danger), and to ensure it has a real presence and audience in the various countries in the region.

6. To commit within the profession to a "Pact of non-aggression" among journalists working in countries involved in armed conflict.

7. To set up an inter-regional consultative committee to follow up the recommendations arising from the Bagamoyo workshop.

8. To hold other regional meetings to continue the exchange of ideas and compare professional practices.

National actions:

9. To consolidate professional associations and independent self-regulatory bodies (press watchdog bodies and media councils); to set up such bodies in countries where they do not exist; to urge them to decentralise their actions and to ensure a presence in the provinces; to encourage the exchange of information and expertise between watchdog bodies/councils.

10. To promote the adoption of Codes of conduct where they do not exist; to extend awareness of such codes and their application by journalists where they do exist; to work towards common professional standards at the regional level.

11. To encourage the foundation of Press Clubs in the various countries of the region and even in the different provinces within each of those countries, so as to make information, documentation, and training available to journalists locally; to network these Clubs at national and regional levels.

12. To diversify the formats through which our media disseminate information, using innovative forms of communication, in order to reach layers of the population untouched by more traditional forms; to create newspaper columns and programmes aimed specifically at giving a voice to the people, dealing with everyday problems (e.g. health, social and humanitarian issues) and involving the public as much as possible in defining content.

13. To help create local media and raise standards of professionalism; to support local media continuing to operate in conflict areas.