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The Role of Communication Education in the Development and Democratization of African Society

by Chen C. Chimutengwende*

Abstract

This study looks into the concept of democracy as it is understood within the African context and the role which the mass media could play in promoting and sustaining it. It argues that, given Africa's colonial experience and its history of struggle for human dignity and liberation, the appropriate role for the mass media must be to sustain this struggle. Accordingly, their relevance must be seen in relation to the extent to which they promote the developmental and democratic aspirations of the majority of the people. And, as such, training of African media practitioners must be predicated on the necessity to give them clear orientation for the achievement of these goals. Finally, the professional status of journalists and of the journalism profession must be acknowledged by political authorities and policy makers; journalists must be appropriately remunerated and their profession upgraded within the hierarchy of national priorities.

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Le rôle de la formation en communication dans le développement et la démocratisation de la société africaine.

Résumé

Cette étude porte sur le concept de la démocratie telle qu'elle est comprise dans le contexte africain et le rôle que les mass médias pourraient jouer pour sa promotion et son enracinement. Pour l'auteur, l'expérience coloniale et l'histoire de la lutte pour la dignité humaine et la libération confèrent aux mass médias un rôle approprié pour la perennité de ce combat en Afrique. En conséquence, ils ne peuvent être pertinents que dans la mesure où ils participent à la promotion des aspirations de la majorité au développement et à la démocratie. Pour cela, la formation des hommes de médias africains doit prendre en compte la nécessité de leur donner une orientation claire en vue d'atteindre ces objectifs.

Enfin, le statut professionnel des journalistes et la profession du journalisme doivent être reconnus à leur valeur par les autorités et les décideurs; les journalistes doivent être rémunérés de manière appropriée et leur profession doit être relevée dans la hiérarchie des priorités nationales.

Introduction

There are many factors which can enhance the development and the democratization process in society. Communication education is one such factor. There is a crucial link between communication, development and the democratization of society. This paper examines the validity of this assumption and explains how communication education can enhance the democratization and development of Africa.

However democracy is defined, it is a relative concept and a permanent movement in all generations and societies. It is unlikely to be completely absent or perfectly manifested in any society. In practice, there are usually powerful forces for and against it. Whatever stage the democratization of any society may have reached, it is a result of the interplay of conflicts and resolution of such conflicts in society. Democratization leads to more equity especially in the laws which govern human relations. It also leads to the elimination of conditions which promote, or allow, the exploitation of persons or groups of people by others.

The following features characterize a democratic situation and governments may be considered democratic or otherwise in accordance with the extent to which they strive for the achievement of most or all of them:

1. Provision of full employment and security of employment through the establishment and stimulation of economic activities.
2. Development of agriculture for the achievement of food sufficiency for all citizens.
3. Provision of decent and affordable housing.
4. Establishment of adequate health facilities and services.
5. Provision of free education.
6. Provision of good roads and adequate transport and telecommunications systems.
7. Establishment of acceptable and affordable price levels for all basic commodities.
8. Ensuring mass participation in decision making and in the development process through constant consultations between the people and administrators and officials; and the existence of enough checks and balances to prevent corruption and the abuse of power in

high places; in addition, government must guarantee human rights.

9. Ensuring freedom of expression, continuous debate, and national criticism and self-criticism aimed at achieving effective, practical, superior and humane forms of organization, better methods of work, mass mobilization and social progress.
10. Ensuring that the allocation of national resources is not in any way at the expense of the first six priorities which should be considered the primary goals of society.

These ten features are considered primary by the majority of the people in developing countries. Anything else may be considered important but not primary. The usual struggles are for such issues, especially for the first six.

This study further argues that there is need to advance the democratization of post-independent Africa and that this is already going on at certain levels; it does not, however, go into what levels it has reached in various African countries. This has been covered elsewhere (Chimutengwende 1986). The emphasis here is on how communication education can promote development and democracy. The communication in question here is mainly communication through the mass media.

This paper looks into the role of mass communication in national development, the training of communication practitioners and scholars, working conditions of media personnel, development and democracy, and the role of the media in the democratization process.

The question of communication education is one of manpower training and development. This problem exists at all levels in all sectors of society and African countries are no exception. The issue of manpower development is more acute in developing countries than in the developed world. The shortage of qualified manpower is one of the major characteristics of underdevelopment. As in other sectors of African society, the field of journalism is affected by lack of well trained and skilled personnel.

Development and the Mass Media

We start by briefly looking at the issue of the development process and the role of the mass media in it. Development is a consciously planned and coordinated process for the speedy socio-economic advancement of society with clearly defined objectives and goals. As a process it proceeds through set stages and targets. This is irrespective of whether a country is following socialist or capitalist paths to development. The role of government in post-colonial societies in the planning and coordination of

development is, therefore, vital and decisive (Chimutengwende 1986). It follows that for speedy and planned development, mass mobilization of the population becomes essential, and the educational, motivational, agitational, and organizational roles of the mass media are unavoidably crucial (Aldeman 1967; Apter 1965; Tinbergen 1967; Mboya 1970).

People have to be motivated, informed, educated, persuaded and organized nationally if the nation is to engage in a systematic and efficient national movement for the speedy and progressive reduction, and eventual elimination of mass poverty, squalor, endemic diseases, illiteracy, unemployment, injustice, corruption, rural neglect, and other problems of underdevelopment which characterize post-colonial societies. These very problems motivated the colonized people to resist colonial rule and demand national liberation so that they might be better able to tackle them. Any government which does not actively espouse the task of a speedy and progressive reduction and final elimination of these problems as a priority is likely to be confronted with constant political unrest, instability and, sooner or later, with an abrupt eviction from power. The people naturally anticipate that their aspirations, which were frustrated during colonialism, may be realized after independence. At least they expect to see themselves immediately and effectively involved in a process which they are convinced will lead them to a speedy fruition of their hopes, now that the state purportedly belongs to them. It is in this context that the liberation struggle is seen as a continuous process which proceeds in a different form and at a higher level after independence.

Therefore, development-oriented and campaigning journalism is essential to developing countries, and any other type of journalism should be seen as a luxury, irrelevant and a waste of resources. The notion that mass media are one of the essential auxiliary means of modern economic construction, social and cultural development is supported by Frantz Fanon, when he argues that 'The people must know where they are going and why a specific course has been embarked on. The politician must realise that the future will remain dim as long as people's consciousness remains dim and incomplete' (Quoted in Ullrich 1974).

Modernizing life patterns and changing irrational ideas and attitudes based on ignorance and many other practices which are not conducive to national development are tasks which the media could be made to perform effectively. The mass media are an important means of socialization and of the social process. The dominant media are agents of social control. Their ideological and socialization functions are continually being defined in developing countries as indispensable factors in programmes for national development.

In 1965 the Ghana Government defined the role of the mass media in national development as one of collective stimulator, educator and

organizer of the people for the modernization process. The media can be effective in campaigns aimed at improving health, education, agricultural techniques; encouraging the growth of participant political institutions, industrial production and expansion; enforcing social norms; raising aspirations; focussing attention; widening horizons; giving legitimacy to values and institutions; conferring status and validity; feeding interpersonal channels; encouraging informed debate; forming tastes; exposing corruption; attacking retrogressive and deviationist tendencies; and they can serve as an important national integrative agency (Quoted in Ullrich 1974).

Precisely how the media perform their role, and problems they may face vary from one country to another, or from one period to another. Nevertheless, there are certain functions the media can perform to aid national development which are generally accepted or applicable to various Third World countries. In certain developing countries the mass media are state-owned or controlled, while in others they are privately-owned, or only partially state-owned. But even in countries where they are privately-owned, they are still expected to support national development programmes and, in one way or other, to act as state-directed instruments or agents of planned social change. Their role or tasks are assumed or included in national development plans irrespective of whether they are privately-or state-owned or a combination of both.

The major dilemma in those developing countries in which the media are privately-owned is how to make commercially-owned and motivated media to serve development needs. Development journalism cannot practically and beneficially be left in the hands of the present foreign commercial interests because their primary aim is to make profits, and this very often clashes with the need to serve development information needs of society. Yet, government ownership or control does not automatically guarantee that media will effectively serve development needs. The nature of development, the relationship between the government and the people, and the training and orientation of media personnel are crucial factors. The media can be criminally abused and manipulated by an oppressive regime.

Those who advocate Western models of communication media for developing countries have not given convincing answers to the question of media relevance to development. Even those developing countries which originally attempted to adopt the Western economic and political theories and strategies of socio-economic development had to abandon many other basic Western principles of evolutionary advancement. This necessity has tremendous implications for the organization, structure, control, and the role of the media, and it equally affects the content and pace of

communication training, education and research. Adhering to the Western evolutionary approach with an unplanned economy guided by the principles of private enterprise would produce a different communication media whose purpose would not be to serve the development needs of the country as generally understood in the Third World. For in such Western societies governments do not directly get involved in the media (Schramm 1964; Lerner 1963; Golding 1974).

In a Third World country trying to develop rapidly, the government has to be involved in the establishment and organization of the media and also in defining communication policies. Where certain media structures do not exist, the government has a duty to establish them. After establishing them, the government cannot easily give them away to a commercial enterprise not dedicated to national development and the consolidation of independence. Besides, acceptance of the government's duty to define national communication policies implies compliance by the media institutions. One is not normally expected to plan a policy for something one does not own or control. But government control and guidance should not mean the suffocation of responsible criticism. Debate should be allowed on all issues through the mass media before major decisions are made. Without that, there is neither socialist or capitalist democracy. It will simply be crude dictatorship based on populism.

The mass media do not as yet directly reach the majority of the people in Africa. But they nevertheless reach the key groups and opinion makers at the centre of modern development; these are the people whose political wishes and views are decisive at the present time in developing countries. The media have short-term and long-term influence on the ruling and 'modernizing elites'. But it is also part of development to continuously increase the mass media audience and directly reach the majority of the people. Without reaching the majority through the use of mass media, quick mass mobilization for development becomes an almost impossible task. The media can effectively feed and complement traditional and interpersonal channels of communication in the mass mobilization of the populace.

The Training of Communication Practitioners and Scholars

Immediately after political independence, the need to train African journalists in large numbers became more and more apparent. Some of the media formerly owned by white settlers were taken over by governments. Some of the settlers who ran the mass media left Africa and others who remained needed to be replaced as their attitudes and ideas were opposed to the new reality of African majority rule. The inevitable expansion of the print and broadcast media and government information services meant

that African media practitioners were needed at all levels and in larger numbers than ever before.

But African governments and educational institutions could not easily establish programmes or schemes for the training of media personnel. In English-speaking Africa, for instance, the old British traditional idea that journalists were born and not created was strong. There was, therefore, resistance in some official and educational circles to the idea of formal training for journalists (Nurkse 1953; Lewis 1960; Pearson 1969). Many of the old African journalists who were trained on-the-job during the colonial period also supported the idea that formal training for journalists was neither necessary nor good. African academics, true to their British upbringing and educational values, could not easily accept the idea of formal journalism training especially in the universities. They gave the conservative, elitist and anti-development argument to the effect that a university was a centre for satisfying the 'academic and intellectual' rather than the 'vocational' needs of society.

Mass communication was also not seen as an independent academic discipline. It was anathema even to suggest that mass communication studies should be introduced in secondary education as a long-term strategy for increasing public access and participation in the communication process. They could neither accept that it was another effective way of increasing awareness among the people about the nature and uses of mass media nor could they understand that if mass communication was included in secondary education curricula, recruitment for future media trainees would be made easier. Opposition to these ideas and attitudes persist to the present day.

Mass communication education needs to be included in the curricula from at least the upper secondary level right through to the university. The mass media have grown to be a force in society whose role and power is immeasurably important. Society, for its own good, cannot afford to ignore the need to understand the nature, role and use of the modern media. Apart from that, if media studies were introduced at secondary and university levels alongside other subjects, the problem of lack of good and potential media trainees would be drastically reduced. The problem of media human resources would not be as acute as is at present. The inclusion of communication studies in the education curricula in Africa at all levels should, therefore, become a part of national communication policy.

The other impediment to introducing or strengthening communication training, education and research after independence has been lack of resources. The arrangement of development priorities and allocation of resources is a problem which is still to be sorted out. Most elements in the leadership of Third World states is unconsciously obsessed with prestige

'development' projects because of colonial 'hang-ups'. They have a love-hate relationship with their former colonial masters — constantly denouncing them as imperialists and, at the same time, continuously seeking advice, consultants and economic 'aid' from them, including resources for communication education.

Their anti-imperialism is unclear and development priorities distorted. The communication media as a sector need to be upgraded as a development priority. This is where international agencies and organizations can also play an important role. They have the resources and the experience to supplement national resources and efforts. All this leads to the realization of the world information and communication order.

Newspapers and broadcasting stations have always carried out some form of training on-the-job. Many formal courses have also been held, usually with foreign instructors or experts. International Press Institute, Thomson Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Commonwealth Association organized, and still organize, some training courses for media personnel. Some of the most significant and early training schemes were launched by the International Press Institute at the beginning of the 1960s. Two pioneer centres for the training of journalists in Africa were set up, one in Nairobi for East and Central Africa and another in Lagos for West Africa. These later became the School of Journalism at the University of Nairobi, and the Department of Mass Communication at the University of Lagos.

But most of the training schemes in various parts of Africa were *ad hoc*, intermittent, haphazard and uncoordinated (Minkinen 1978). Whether a training programme would be held or not depended almost completely on the availability of foreign expertise and funds. There was no serious attempt to train local instructors. Since the international agencies and organizations were fearful of becoming involved in local politics, the syllabi of the courses tended to be narrow. They concentrated on short crash courses aimed at giving basic communication skills (UNESCO 1975). This was mainly on how to report, write an article, produce a newspaper, how to announce, and make radio programmes.

There was no social science component in the syllabi and yet the trainees often had at most only a maximum of four years of primary education. Social science back-up subjects like development economics, history, politics and international affairs would have been valuable to the trainees in their future work as interpreters of society and communicators. But where such subjects were included in the syllabi there was usually the problem of the orientation of the foreign instructors. Their views and values were not often development-oriented or in harmony with the political direction of the country and aspirations of the people, including that of the trainees themselves. This problem raised the question: Training

for what? This question has still not been adequately tackled to the present day.

From the beginning of the independence era, a significant number of media personnel were trained in the developed countries. The trainees faced the problem of using equipment for training purposes which was not in use in their own countries. The syllabi were not geared to the needs, values and aspirations of developing societies. The Western emphasis on professionalism led to the avoidance of questions concerning the objectives and orientation of communication work which were important in the context of a developing society. The training of African media personnel in developed countries was in three main forms. Some were attached for a period to newspapers or broadcasting stations; others were admitted into the regular media courses mainly intended for trainees of the developed countries, and the third category were of people who were put into courses especially designed for them.

In the late 1960s, there was a growing number of decision makers, planners, scholars and educationists who saw and objected to the absurdity of producing African media professionals who were mere carbon copies of those in the former colonial powers. The production of 'robot' and uncommitted communicators or media workers whose outlook and philosophy of life was not in harmony with the circumstances and aspirations of Africa was increasingly becoming unacceptable. Dependence on short-term foreign consultants or training abroad, or on crash courses was losing credibility. The idea of setting up permanent structures for communication training, education and research in Africa began to gain more support.

The inadvisability of uncontrolled foreign media training was clearly voiced by two African broadcasters in a UNESCO (1967) report in which they stated:

In recent years the offering of...attachment has been viewed as a prestige item by many countries. It is a rather simple and inexpensive way in which advanced countries can give aid to developing countries.

It certainly looks good on the credit side of the aid ledger but in most cases the benefits derived by the recipient country do not justify the time spent on them.... In their present form, most attachments, especially those arranged for junior staff, tend to give officers a holiday and return them home confused while their organizations suffer by losing their services during the period of attachment (see also Barton 1969).

By 1980, there was an estimated 30 African schools or centres or regular programmes for communication training in 50 independent African States. Many countries had no such centres or regular programmes of any kind while others had several.

The existing centres or institutes or schools, as they may be called, are

mainly university departments or training sections of ministries of information, like the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication, or they may be under the sponsorship of religious organizations like the All Africa Conference of Churches Communication Training Centre in Nairobi.

Those which are part of the university system offer both professional and academic training in mass communication studies at advanced level. They try to combine and integrate the theory and practice of communication work coupled with a firm academic base in different disciplines for the students.

Government-sponsored media institutions specialize in mid-career professional training with a technical bias. The broadcasting, newspaper and film organizations which carry in-service regular training programmes for their staff or future staff concentrate on professional training. The church-funded institutions or programmes have a religious bias and their primary task is the production of professionals who would serve the communication needs of the church.

The debate as to whether professional training in mass communication is best done in a university environment or in a special independent institution or on-the-job within the media organizations is a continuing one. If a special institution is the best place, then there is a further question on which there is much disagreement among those who prefer professional training in journalism to be outside the University. The question is whether or not a non-university institution for such training should be under a government ministry. If it is outside the university and not under a government ministry, who would finance it? Another unresolved question is: Can a non-university institution under a ministry of information be able to engage in communication research of a high standard? Students also prefer to study for qualifications which are internationally recognized such as universities give.

There is no continental policy on the nature and distribution of media education centres. Some countries like Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana and Egypt have more than two such institutions covering both mid-career training for graduates who want to enter the communication field. Other countries do not even have a single centre at any level. Ideally there should be at least one national communication training centre in each country for mid-career training under a ministry of information apart from the in-service training programmes of individual media organizations.

Since a national centre under a ministry of information is not an academic institution, it can and should accept people for training without the usual academic qualifications normally required by university.

It is best suited to organize refresher and other courses for practising media professionals apart from regular courses. But it cannot easily carry out academic research and studies or be able to award degrees because of

its very nature and institutional framework.

Senior media personnel who are academically and professionally well-trained are necessary for the fast development of a mass communication system capable of playing an effective role in the education and mass mobilization of the people for national development. There has been a tendency to ignore advanced communication training at the university level because the authorities are afraid of well-educated people producing media content. The authorities would not be able to control and manipulate such media workers.

Most of our present senior media professionals reached that high level through in-service training and working experience. This process is slow and cannot produce enough media professionals as required in big numbers. While in-service training should not be done away with, formal training should also be established. Sometimes these two forms of training can be combined, and this would be the ideal.

The advanced training centres should ideally be organized on a regional basis because of the small numbers of students needed for each country at that level. It is economical to group a number of countries and provide at least one centre for them at university level. Since such a regional centre would be required not only to carry out professional or practical training in journalism but also to carry out research and teach communication theories at degree level, the university is the best place for it. Its responsibility would be to produce senior media practitioners, educators, communication sociologists, policy makers, advisers, and researchers. Southern Africa as a group of countries, for instance, needs at least one such university department with a regional focus. The School of Journalism at the University of Nairobi also needs to continue to meet the training needs of the East African countries as a group. But the establishment of regional centres should not stop individual universities from introducing communication studies in their curricula. University departments which are treated as regional centres should have a strong professional content.

Communication institutions are at present too few and not well distributed geographically. The few which exist lack adequate facilities, funds and are under-staffed. They are, therefore, not well prepared for the tasks for which they were established. They cannot as yet train enough media educators, practitioners, researchers, administrators, planners, technicians and other categories of media workers. The numbers they train are insignificant and very often not well-trained and can hardly satisfy the demands of the communications sector of society. If international agencies and other outsiders are interested in helping Africa to be self-reliant in journalism and other areas of communication training, they should put their resources into these African media training centres instead of getting

involved in direct and independent haphazard training. Direct training by these agencies is not in the interest of self-reliance and helps to maintain foreign media dependence. Once our training institutions are strengthened and can cope with training, we would not need any further training aid in that field and at that level.

The establishment and strengthening of African national news agencies and the Pan-African News Agency (PANA) will require more and well trained journalists and other media personnel at both the lower and advanced levels. Crash courses are a temporary solution. The real solution would mean that both university and non-university centres be strengthened through infusion of adequate financial resources and facilities. These institutions would then provide journalism training to new-comers to the field and continuing education and skills training to practitioners who wish to improve their qualifications.

Many trained journalists leave their profession for related or, sometimes, entirely new jobs quite unrelated to their training and experience. Some, especially those who prove to be good in their work, are promoted to either managerial or administrative positions in the media or in government and state institutions (Quarmyne 1967). On the surface, this looks like a loss to the country, but on further examination, and while such defection may be a loss to the communication field, it does not usually constitute a loss to the country. Considering that there is a shortage of manpower in all sectors of the economy in most African countries, it is not, therefore, a loss for such countries. The communication professionals who leave the mass media are not leaving the country but merely serving it at other levels and in other capacities.

Communication training and education in its wider sense does not only prepare people to work in the press, radio and television services, the film industry, public relations or in the media research organisations. It is a type of training which can improve one's performance and chances in other fields of work which may be equally valuable to society. The content of communication studies itself is highly interdisciplinary. As a result, the opinion which is gaining currency among journalists, media trainers, scholars and administrators is that training people in communication work not only prepares them for work in the mass media but also for service to the country in other ways.

The Status and Working Conditions of Media Personnel

For the communication professional, the nature of his work also puts him in a position where making useful contacts becomes relatively easy. Through such contacts one may come across better openings in other

institutions and they change jobs accordingly. Very often, however, communication professionals are accused of opportunism and non-commitment to their profession, and using it only as a stepping stone to 'greener pastures'. The reason is that their profession is often made unattractive by the authorities.

Communicators are confronted by the fact that most of their governments do not seem to recognize them as professionals. This is shown first by their treatment and the attitudes of the authorities towards them. They are almost always treated as objects of suspicion and possible persecution unlike people in other professions. Furthermore, there is no job security for them because of the sensitive nature of their role in society. It is, indeed, dangerous for them to work in such a sensitive field when their rights to, and obligations in society, and the relationship between the media and the state are not clearly defined.

Often job and personal security of journalists are at the whims of arbitrary state officials. Media workers are also often the first victims of the frequent changes of government in developing countries since their societies are highly politically polarized.

Another indication of the lack of recognition of communication as an important profession is the attitude of authorities to communication training which is almost always in the hands of ill-equipped private institutions, or media organizations themselves, or international aid agencies and organizations. Where there is government involvement, it is usually not continuous, nor is it normally based on any consistent policy.

Low wages in the media in comparison with other professions is another important constraining factor. Added to this, promotions are slow and based on civil service procedures which are unsuitable to communicators because of the very nature of their work. This applies especially to countries where the media are state-owned and media professionals are part of the civil service.

Professional communicators, therefore, find that if they worked outside the mass media they would get better wages, quicker promotions, more serious attention to their training needs, better job and personal security, less chances of being arbitrarily persecuted, and better recognition and status in the eyes of the authorities. It is only through the improvement of working conditions of media personnel and the recognition of their status at the level of that of engineers and medical doctors that they can be confident and play their role effectively. But it would seem more appropriate that communication professionals should take the lead to struggle for their recognition and remuneration.

Conclusions

The level of communication education and media expansion in society is a product of the development of that society. It reflects the level of the country's socio-economic development. The media do not exist in a vacuum. They are established by society like any other social institutions in order to perform certain supportive functions. Society maintains them only when they carry out their designated functions (Chimutengwende 1978).

The development of the communications system is an integral part of the development of the nation as a whole, communication systems being part of a nation's social institutions. Moreover, each social institution has a task of contributing to the development of the nation and all other social institutions. It is a complex and interdependent relationship. While the mass media, therefore, are developed by society, they in turn help to develop that society and to promote its aspirations. The aspirations of the people include the democratization of society and the media have an especially critical role to play in this.

As discussed earlier, after political liberation, the next stage of the struggle is national development and the exercise of the democratic rights which the people were denied before independence. This next stage is for the development and democratization of society. It is through development that the material conditions of the people can be continuously improved and this is what the anti-colonial or the liberation struggle was all about.

The content of communication education must reflect the aspirations of the people — aspirations for which the people fought. Only then would the media perform their role as effective communication instruments in the development and democratization of society.

But if there is no development, e.g., there is rural neglect, or development priorities are distorted and not primarily geared directly to improvements in the economic conditions of the people, or if questions on education, health facilities, housing, employment, transport and prices are not satisfactorily dealt with, the people will start opposing or challenging the government. Lack of development means lack of fruits of independence for the people who fought for that independence. This also implies that the government will start suppressing debate and implementing repressive measures in order to protect itself from the wrath of the people. Thus the democratization process will have come to a standstill.

If communication education is appropriate it means most of the media practitioners who come out through that system will effectively get the

media to support development and democratization processes. The media would then serve as a fora for development and democratic ideas and stimulation.

Under the present local and global socio-economic conditions and environment, the role of the mass media of communication in Africa would be to perform the following tasks: (1) Promote literacy, health, agricultural and educational campaigns; (2) Act as channels for general and informal education; (3) Support agitational and mass mobilization campaigns for national development; (4) Defend human rights and promote mass participation and control in decision-making; (5) Continuously provoke and promote national, sectoral and occupational debates; (6) Encourage ordinary people to freely and publicly express themselves through media contributions like letters to the editor and random street interviews on given topical events and developments; (7) Promote economic policies based on principles of self-reliance and self-sufficiency; (8) Promote the prioritization of people-oriented national development projects and expose the counter-productive nature of elitist and prestige-motivated national projects; (9) Expose corruption, exploitation, racism, ethnic chauvinism and anti-people national policies and to give solidarity to victims of such policies locally and internationally; (10) Support national independence in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres; (11) Promote national, regional and pan-African unity, solidarity and justice; and (12) Support world peace, disarmament and the democratization of international relations.

But for the media to perform these tasks effectively, the following media problems would need to be solved, or at least, solutions to them demonstrably pursued: (1) Lack of resources for media establishment and expansion — who should pay? (2) Acquisition of media technology problems of foreign currency. (3) The question of news print: problems of foreign currency. (4) Who should own or control the media, the state or the private sector or a combination of both, and who should pay, with what consequences? (5) Should the media be seen as a service or as business through commercial adverts and with what consequences? (6) Relations with the state: Should the state pay without controlling? (7) Who should decide on the overall orientation of the media — the state, commercial interests or media practitioners? (8) How far can media practitioners be free to run and control the media when someone else is paying? (9) Training of mass communication practitioners and research: At what level should this be done, with what orientation, and who should pay and decide? (10) Regional cooperation in news materials and personnel, seminars and conferences: Who should pay and why? (11) On what priority level should the mass media be in relation to other national priorities? (12)

How can the conditions of service for media practitioners be improved in order to retain them in the field of communication?

A partial answer to these questions is that, like in other sectors of society, there will be no adequate resources for the media in the foreseeable future. The role of foreign aid would have to remain crucial and should be concentrated on (1) the supply of and assistance in developing and manufacturing media technology; and (2) establishing and developing local and regional training schemes and institutions, and for training the trainers and other senior categories of media personnel.

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