

WAN-IFRA announces New Media Freedom Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa

The World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) has announced a new partnership with the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support media freedom in nine countries across Sub-Saharan Africa.



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WAN-IFRA will work with print and digital media organisations in Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe to improve the safety of journalists and the security of newsrooms, increase media-led advocacy around press freedom and gender-related issues, provide high-level business and editorial management support, and offer financial assistance to strengthen public interest reporting.

The partnership builds on a previous three-year strategic engagement with the Ministry (2015-2018) and complements WAN-IFRA's existing programme engagements on the African continent through long-term collaborations with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the ground-breaking Women In News programme, as well as the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

“We are delighted to renew our partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark and to start work on this important new project with our colleagues across Africa,” said WAN-IFRA CEO, Vincent Peyrègne.



Media Ethics and Credibility Report handed over to SANEF

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“The last 12 months have exacerbated an already difficult situation for media globally, and African newsrooms are no exception. Many are struggling to successfully transition towards a digital future, innovate their products to remain

appealing to audiences, or strengthen their business and editorial competencies under such harsh financial conditions. Added to this, the safety of journalists and persistent threats to press freedom make supporting colleagues across the continent an urgent priority.”

Over the coming months, WAN-IFRA will identify newsrooms and media partners who will be invited to participate in this new initiative. Drawing on its Women in News network, the organisation’s Media Freedom Committees in Africa, and a growing membership community, up to 25 organisations will be selected to benefit from the resources and opportunities provided by this new programme.

Over the course of the three-year project, WAN-IFRA will work with media partners to:

- Assess their approach to safety, offering training and direct assistance to strengthen journalists’ knowledge and preparedness as well as organisational responses to threats;
- Strengthen and build media-led advocacy networks and campaign on media freedom issues relevant to local journalists;
- Tailor support to editorial and business development through training and mentoring;
- Provide micro-grants to finance public interest reporting

“It is an important year for media freedom in Africa, with the 30th anniversary of UNESCO’s pivotal Windhoek Declaration providing a necessary point of reflection to judge successes and understand the work still required to ensure a strong, independent press can flourish,” said WAN-IFRA Press Freedom executive director, Andrew Heslop.

“This timely new project strengthens WAN-IFRA’s engagement with media across Africa, giving us the opportunity to build on our support to long-term partners who have been on the front lines of defending press freedom for many years, but also crucially the chance to welcome exciting new media voices whose vision for Africa is essential to include.”

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