



**REVIEW MEETING WITH MEDIA STAKEHOLDERS ON THE 2022  
WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX HELD ON MONDAY, 13TH JUNE  
2022 AT THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION:**

**AGREEMENTS REACHED AMONG THE STAKEHOLDERS**

## **Introduction/ Purpose**

On Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022, the Ministry of Information engaged stakeholders in the media to discuss issues raised in the latest edition (20<sup>th</sup>) of the World Press Freedom Index compiled annually by Reporters Without Borders. The engagement also assessed how Ghana fared in comparison with other countries globally on the various indicators used. The engagement was held at the conference room of the Ministry. The engagement also afforded the stakeholders the opportunity to share their understanding of the report.

## **Stakeholders engaged include the following;**

- The Ministry of Information;
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;
- National Media Commission;
- Ghana Journalists Association;
- The Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association;
- Private Newspaper Publishers Association of Ghana.

## **Background**

The World Press Freedom Ranking which is published annually by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) assesses the state of journalism in 180 countries worldwide. The latest edition (the 20<sup>th</sup> published in 2022) covers the measurement of a number of indicators. Globally, the report “reveals a two-fold increase in polarisation amplified by information chaos – that is, media polarisation fuelling divisions within countries, as well as polarisation between countries at the international level”.

## **Focus of the Discussion:**

- a. The Report by RSF on Ghana
- b. The new methodology adopted by RSF
- c. Scores and ranking of Ghana compared to other countries
- d. Stakeholders’ understanding of the report
- e. How to improve Ghana’s scores in subsequent years

## **Outcome of the review meeting**

Having thoroughly reviewed the report, most of the stakeholders agreed that Ghana's score was generally good. Stakeholders further agreed that the only parameter in which Ghana performed below average was Economic Context (47.22%). This refers to the economic conditions of journalists on one hand and financial sustainability of media houses on the other. Stakeholders also agreed that the score on Safety of Journalists, though moderately high needed to be improved in subsequent years.

**The 2022 edition also** “highlights the disastrous effects of news and information chaos – the effects of a globalised and unregulated online information space that encourages fake news and propaganda”.

The report also notes that “within democratic societies, divisions are growing as a result of the spread of opinion media following the “Fox News model” and the spread of disinformation circuits that are amplified by the way social media functions. At the international level, democracies are being weakened by the asymmetry between open societies and despotic regimes that control their media and online platforms while waging propaganda wars against democracies. Polarisation on these two levels is fuelling increased tension”.

The 2022 report was developed with a new methodology by RSF, which considers the following broad areas:

- Legal Framework and Justice System
- Technological Censorship and Surveillance
- Disinformation and Propaganda
- Arbitrary Detentions and Proceedings
- Independence and Pluralism
- Models and Good Practices
- Media Sustainability, and
- Violence Against Journalists

The report was also impacted by unregulated online media spaces that served as conduits for spreading fake news and disinformation, a situation that was exacerbated by social media endorsements. The report further indicates that advent of opinion media and propaganda, coupled with ownership of traditional media houses by politicians (30%) partly accounted for this new ranking.

It is instructive to note that the new methodology deployed by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) for the 2022 ranking relied primarily on five (5) parameters; these are

- Media Landscape
- Political Context
- Legal Framework
- Economic Context, and
- Safety of journalists.

According to the five (5) parameters assessed under the new methodology, Ghana scored the following:

- Legal Framework (81.42%)
- Socio-cultural Context (79.64%)
- Political Context (66.61%)
- Safety of Journalists (62.25%).
- Economic Context (47.22%).

Ghana's scores under these parameters culminated in an average score of 67.43% and 60<sup>th</sup> position on the new global ranking. Owing to the new methodology, Ghana's ranking declined from 30<sup>th</sup> position in 2021 to 60<sup>th</sup>. Stakeholders agreed on recommendations which when implemented shall improve Ghana's position in subsequent years.

## **Recommendations**

- To improve the score on economic context, stakeholders agreed to encourage media practitioners to form unions to improve their bargaining power with their employers. Media owners would also be encouraged to consider program syndications to increase market share and consequently revenue command while ensuring that these revenues percolate down to the journalist who does the hard work on the ground at the end of the day. It was also recommended that the government should give priority to private media organizations by equitably distributing paid advertisements.
- Capacitate the National Media Commission to discharge its functions by exploring and soliciting support from the local and international community/organizations. With the adequate resources, the Commission shall

realize an operative monitoring mechanism for the safety of journalists and most importantly expedite investigations into the attacks on pressmen.

- Fast tracking the passage of the broadcasting bill into law to regulate the broadcasting space. Also, to ensure an equitable allocation of broadcasting licenses amongst the three tiers of broadcasting.
- Work in collaboration with the National Media Commission to deepen the execution of the Coordinated Mechanism on the Safety of Journalists. Thereafter, a collaborative effort shall be sustained with stakeholders including Civil Society Organisations in deepening education for State and non-State actors on the safety of journalists. Most importantly, the collaboration should boost mutual considerations with political authorities to ensure that they desist from using the security services to incite assaults on journalists.
- Members agreed to hold annually, a media and national development conference by the National Media Commission in partnership with the Ministry of Information. The purpose of this conference is to bring together stakeholders to participate on a broader platform to hold discussions that will help shape policies and to promote the media within the national development discourse.

## **Conclusion**

Stakeholders were pleased by the engagements with the Ministry. The Ministry of Information also assured the stakeholders of its commitment to engage with partners to develop measures that will enhance press freedom.