AFRICAN CHARTER ON BROADCASTING

There have been significant gains in media freedom in Africa since the adoption of the Windhoek Declaration on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press in 1991. However, the declaration focused primarily on the promotion of the print media and was silent on issues such as broadcasting liberalisation and the globalisation of the communications industry. These issues have far-reaching social and economic implications for media freedom and threaten to jeopardise the production of media that reflects Africa’s rich cultural diversity.

A representative group of African media practitioners sought to address these concerns at a UNESCO conference celebrated the 10th anniversary of the original Windhoek Declaration. The result was the African Charter on Broadcasting which serves as a modern blueprint for policies and frameworks for broadcasting and information technology in Africa.

We the Participants of Windhoek+10

Declare that:

PART Four

TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND CONVERGENCE

1. The right to communicate includes access to telephones, email, Internet and other telecommunications systems, including through the promotion of community-controlled information communication technology centres.
2. Telecommunications law and policy should promote the goal of universal service and access, including through access clauses in privatisation and liberalisation processes, and proactive measures by the State.
3. The international community and African governments should mobilise resources for funding research to keep abreast of the rapidly changing media and technology landscape in Africa.
4. African governments should promote the development of online media and African content, including through the formulation of non-restrictive policies on new information and communications technologies.
5. Training of media practitioners in electronic communication, research and publishing skills needs to be supported and expanded, in order to promote access to, and dissemination of, global information.

PART Five

IMPLEMENTATION

1. UNESCO should distribute the African Charter on Broadcasting as broadly as possible, including to stakeholders and the general public, both in Africa and worldwide.
2. Media organisations and civil society in Africa are encouraged to use the Charter as a lobbying tool and as their starting point in the development of national and regional broadcasting policies. To this end media organisations and civil society are encouraged to initiate public awareness campaigns, to form coalitions on broadcasting reform, to formulate broadcasting policies, to develop specific models for regulatory bodies and public service broadcasting, and to lobby relevant official actors.
3. All debates about broadcasting should take into account the needs of the commercial broadcasting sector.
4. UNESCO should undertake an audit of the Charter every five years, given the pace of development in the broadcasting field.
5. UNESCO should raise with member governments the importance of broadcast productions being given special status and recognised as cultural goods under the World Trade Organization rules.
6. UNESCO should take measures to promote the inclusion of the theme of media, communications and development in an appropriate manner during the UN Summit on the Information Society in 2003.

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(For the logo represents the symbol of a tree, and two hands that are used by the Bamum people of Cameroon.)