



CONCEPT NOTE
CONGRESS OF ACP PRESS CLUBS
2016



I. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Press and media associations are vital Non-State Actors (NSA) in ACP countries, serving as catalysts for development by helping to ensure healthy democracies through a robust and professional media sector, bolstering transparency in public affairs, raising public awareness on important development issues, as well as facilitating debate and the dynamic exchange of information and ideas. For institutions such as the ACP Group, the engagement of press and media groups is essential to enhancing visibility and public education, due to their capacity as multipliers of information, their outreach to a wide variety of stakeholders, and their potential to influence over public opinion.

However, since its inception, the ACP Group has yet to develop a comprehensive, structured, well-supported partnership with the press bodies of its Member States, as compared for example, to the [Commonwealth Journalists Association](#), the [Public Media Alliance](#) (formerly known as the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association), the [United Nations Correspondents Association](#) or the [Union Internationale de la Presse Francophone](#) linked to the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF).

The potential benefits of creating an ACP-wide network of press organisations is significant. Not only does it support the empowerment of media to act as catalysts for good governance and the sustainable development of ACP countries (as mentioned above), it also promotes new horizons for intra-ACP cooperation and synergies via networking platforms, sharing of information, and collaboration amongst ACP media bodies. Such a network would also facilitate outreach and public awareness on ACP and ACP-EU issues.

The rationale for such an initiative can also be drawn from key principles of the ACP Group of States, as cited in the following founding documents:

- (i) **Georgetown Agreement, Article 2** on the ACP Group's main objectives, including Objective (e) "contribute to the development of greater and closer economic, political, social and cultural relations among developing countries and, to that end, cooperation between the ACP States mainly in the fields of... [inter alia] information and communication..."
- (ii) **Cotonou Partnership Agreement Article 5** on Information, which states: "Cooperation will support operation to provide more information and create greater awareness of the basic features of ACP-EU Partnership. Cooperation will also: encourage partnership and build links between ACP and EU actors; strengthen networking and exchange of expertise and experience among the actors."
- (iii) **Cotonou Partnership Agreement Articles 2, 4, and 6** which refer to the necessary and essential engagement of Non-State Actors in ACP-EU cooperation. NSAs comprise of "the private sector; economic and social partners, including trade union organisations; or Civil Society in all its forms according to national characteristics." In this regard, press associations and press clubs, as organised professional groupings, fall into this category.



The ACP Press Clubs initiative

Recognising the need to establish a network of media associations across the Member States, the ACP Secretariat signed an MOU with the European Press Clubs Federation in September 2013, chaired at the time by Belgium (Brussels EU Press Club), to explore the establishment of a federation of ACP Press Clubs¹. Efforts under this partnership resulted in the European Commission funding the first regional congress of ACP Press Clubs in Cotonou, Benin in July 2014, attended by the ACP Secretary General and opened by Benin's Minister of Information and Communication. The meeting provided the basis for a needs analysis study commissioned by the ACP Secretariat in October 2014, which aimed to more clearly outline the foundation for an ACP Press Clubs Federation, including the possible structure of such a network.

Since 2015, the Brussels EU Press Club and the ACP Secretariat have continued to work closely to advance this project. The Brussels EU Press Club is currently in discussions with relevant officials on the anticipated bid by Rwanda to host the General Assembly of the International Association of Press Clubs (IAPC) in 2017, which will be the first for the African continent, and the ACP as a whole.

ACP Congress of Press Clubs in Kigali

Following on the momentum of these developments, it is proposed that an event is organised in the last quarter of 2016, with a view to officially launching a professional network to be known as the ACP Press Clubs Federation (ACP PCF). Kigali is considered a suitable venue given the importance of hosting the event in an ACP country, and the positive working relationship recently initiated with the Press Club of Rwanda.

The ACP-PCF would constitute a network of national press clubs and/or press associations open to all ACP countries, working in collaboration to strengthen the viability and professionalism of media bodies in these regions, and to foster intra-ACP communication, cooperation, and networking with similar international bodies around the world.

It is foreseen that the ACP-PCF, once established, will be the main forum through which the ACP Group, as an organisation, engages with the media in member countries.

II. OBJECTIVE

To bring together national press clubs of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries in the first ever congress of its kind, with a view to establishing a dynamic and sustainable umbrella Federation of ACP Press Clubs.

This federation can serve as a platform to raise awareness about ACP issues, as well as enhance the visibility of the ACP Group.

¹ Although they stand for the same ideals regarding media freedom, democracy and freedom of information, press clubs are distinct from traditional press associations in that the former acts as a 'communication hub' focusing on providing a platform for debate, collaboration and information exchange amongst the press as well as other actors such as government, business, and other members of civil society, whereas press associations focus more on defending the rights of journalists. However, in many ACP countries, press associations and press clubs are interchangeable entities.



III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The following outcomes are expected from the first all-ACP event:

- (i) Contacts established with press associations and press clubs in all ACP regions. A database of contact details of all the participants will be created and shared to all members;
- (ii) Press clubs/associations are informed and made aware of the work of the ACP Group in relation to communications;
- (iii) Framework for the establishment of the ACP Press Clubs Federation to be agreed by participants, with a founding charter endorsed;
- (iv) Recognition of the ACP Press Clubs Federation as one of the main communication channels of the ACP Group of States;
- (v) Plans initiated on joint activities to foster intra-ACP cooperation through communication platforms and building partnerships, via the Federation;
- (vi) Identification of focal points as key conduits for implementation of next steps;

IV. BENEFICIARIES

A range of stakeholders ultimately benefit from this initiative, including:

ACP Press Clubs and Associations have the opportunity to connect, collaborate, share expertise, and be part of an internationally recognised network. Ultimately the federation supports the strengthening of press clubs and press associations in terms of professionalism, sustainability, and connectivity.

ACP Governments, Civil Society and Private Sector have access to professional, neutral, communication hubs throughout the ACP countries, where they can also initiate debates, press events, partnerships and networking initiatives. An empowered press sector is necessary for the proper functioning of any democracy.

ACP Group of States, as an institution, gains new horizons for visibility and partnerships with improved links to media entities in all ACP countries, and a comprehensive platform through which to reach out to audiences and disseminate information.

V. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

The conference will take place over two days (see attached tentative programme).

The first day will include an opening ceremony with high profile guest speakers, as well as presentations from various institutions. The aim is to provide the global context in which the ACP Press Clubs will operate as well as hear directly from the press clubs about what is happening on the ground in ACP regions, including challenges, opportunities, and best practices faced by these bodies.

To ensure ownership, the inputs and contributions from the participants will be elicited as to how they see an ACP Press Clubs Federation functioning, for what purpose, and through what channels.

The second day of activities will deal with more detailed and structural matters, including the endorsement of a founding charter, basic institutional framework, and next steps.



FINAL PROGRAMME
CONGRESS OF ACP PRESS CLUBS
UBUMWE GRANDE HOTEL, KIGALI, RWANDA 2016

Day 1 – Thursday 20th October	
10h00am – 10h45am	MC: Executive Secretary, Rwanda Media Commission Mr. Emmanuel Mugisha
Opening ceremony Welcome Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• President of the Kigali Press Club, Mr. Gaspard Safari• Representative of the Secretary General of the ACP Group of States, Chef de Cabinet Amb. Mamour Alieu Jagne Opening Statements <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Secretary General of the International Association of Press Clubs Mr. Jaroslaw Włodarczyk• Ambassador of the European Union H.E. Michael Ryan• United Nations Resident Coordinator Office Mr. Andrew Mold• KEYNOTE: CEO, Rwanda Governance Board Prof. Anastase Shyaka	
10h45 – 11h00	
Group photo + Coffee break	
11h00 – 12h30	Moderator: President of the Rwanda Journalists Association Mr. Collin Haba
Setting the scene: Media and Communication in a Changing Global Landscape <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Head of Human Rights and Safety, International Federation of Journalists, Mr. Ernest Sagaga: <i>State of journalism in ACP developing countries</i>	
Regional perspectives: Best practices, challenges and opportunities (Eastern Africa, Caribbean , West Africa) Panellists: Executive Director, Tanzania Union of Press Clubs Mr. Abubakar Karsan Msabila President of the Bahamas Press Club Mr. Anthony Newbold President of the Press Club of Senegal Mr. Abdou Gningue Representative of the Norbert Zongo Press Centre of Burkina Faso Ms. Valérie Ouédraogo <i>Discussions</i>	
12h30 – 14h00	
Networking Lunch	



14h00 – 15h00	Moderator: President of the Rwanda Journalists Association Mr. Collin Haba
Part 2 Regional perspectives: Best practices, challenges and opportunities (Central Africa, Pacific, Southern Africa)	
Panellists: Secretary General of the Fédération Syndicale des Travailleurs de la Communication Mr. Edouard Adzotsa Secretary General of the Journalists Association of Samoa Mr. Lance Polu Secretary General of the Fiji Media Association Mr. Stanley Simpson President of the National Press Club of South Africa Mr. Josias Chale	
<i>Discussions</i>	
15h15	<i>END OF DAY 1 VISIT TO RWANDA GENOCIDE MEMORIAL Return to hotels at 17h00</i>
19h00	<i>DINNER RECEPTION AT LEMIGO HOTEL LAUCH OF THE KIGALI PRESS CLUB</i>
Day 2 – Friday 21st October	
9h00 – 10h00	Moderator: Head, Safety and Security – International Federation of Journalists, Mr. Ernest Sagaga
Building blocks of an ACP Press Clubs Federation	
Panellists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President of the Kigali Press Foundation, Mr. Gaspard Safari: <i>Role of Press Clubs in ACP countries</i> • Executive Director, Press Clubs Brussels EU, Mr. Laurent Brihay: <i>Building Blocks for a Sustainable Partnership & The EU Model</i> • Press Officer, ACP Secretariat, Ms. Josephine Latu-Sanft: <i>Local, regional, global - Why an ACP Network of Press Clubs?</i> 	
<i>Discussions</i>	
10h00 – 11h30	Moderator: Press Officer, ACP Secretariat Ms. Josephine Latu-Sanft
What do we want out of the ACP-PCF? Structures, activities, networks Break-out & brainstorming session – Regional Focus Groups ² + Group discussion	
Coffee break	

² Regional groupings in the ACP system includes: West Africa (16 countries), East Africa (14), Central Africa (8), Southern Africa (9), Pacific (15) and Caribbean (16).



11h30 – 13h00

Consideration of a Joint Charter of ACP Press Clubs

- Presentation by IAPC/ Press Club Brussels Europe
- Discussions

13h00 – 14h00

Lunch

14h00 – 15h00

Wrap up

- Recap of discussions
- Approval of ACP Press Clubs Charter
- Nomination of regional focal points/ Executive Board
- Finalisation of next steps
- Closing remarks by CEO, Rwanda Governance Board **Prof. Anastase Shyaka**

*END OF DAY 2
CITY TOUR (OPTIONAL)*