

# Kenya Media Sector Working Group

## MAANZONI DECLARATION

The members of the Kenya Media Sector Working Group having met at Maanzoni Lodge on Friday, March 5, 2021 to Sunday, March, 2021 and having discussed a number of matters relating to enhancing media sustainability in Kenya resolve as follows:

1. **THAT** journalists should be adequately compensated for their labour. This requires the development of acceptable pay scales that take into consideration the needs of journalists. Journalists constitute the key resource that media houses need to operate and, consequently, their needs must be addressed regardless of the prevailing financial or economic challenges. Acceptable pay scales, taking into consideration prevailing economic conditions, skills, academic qualifications and experience, drawn and agreed by the industry should be in place by December 2021.
2. **THAT** The media should be supported to survive the ravages of COVID-19 and economic downturn. Support in the form of tax cuts or holidays, suspension of licence fees and other levies is necessary to ensure the media survives and continues to serve public interest without fear or favour. Media stakeholders will lobby the necessary organs of State before the end of the current financial year in June 2021 to ensure the support is available at the beginning of the next financial year that starts in July 2021.
3. **THAT** the effects of the proliferation of Big-Tech international firms such as Google, and Facebook on the space of journalism need to be urgently addressed through legislative and policy reforms to ensure that value generated from journalism and media work is paid for. The Kenya Media Stakeholders Working Group will lobby the government by December 2021 to develop legislations and policies to ensure the Big-Tech companies are made accountable for their actions and compelled to compensate media houses and journalists in Kenya starting July 2022.
4. **THAT** a Media Fund is necessary to guarantee consistent and continued availability of independent and diverse media. The Kenya Media Stakeholders Working Group will work with Parliament to come up with a law to establish an independent and progressive Media Fund. It is expected that the law would be in place by December 22. Although there is general consensus among members of the Kenya Media Stakeholders Working Group that the Fund is necessary, further consultations will be held within the next six months to determine its look and feel.
5. **THAT** there is need to ensure journalists are adequately trained to prepare them for the new norm engendered by technology disruption and COVID-19. Accordingly, there should be continuous professional development to ensure journalists are aware and capable of delivering on evolving responsibilities. This would also promote public confidence in the media given the unethical behaviour of some journalists, and also help them build capacity on emerging complex subjects. A continuous professional development framework should be in place by June 2022.
6. **THAT** more women should be recruited into journalism to ensure the media provides equal opportunity and space for both men and women. This requires affirmative

action to urgently remedy gender disparities. An affirmative gender inclusive policy drawn the Kenya Media Stakeholders Working Group should be in place by the end of 2022.

7. **THAT** a sector-wide intervention to address any sexual harassment within the media space be urgently undertaken. A sexual harassment policy drawn and validated by the Kenya Media Stakeholders Working Group will be available by July 2021. The sector-wide policy will borrow from individual company sexual harassment policies to ensure a quick turnaround.
8. **THAT** the legal, policy and regulatory regime ought to be reexamined to protect the media independence and enhance press freedom and freedom of expression. More urgently, the Media Council of Kenya Act, 2013, and the Kenya Information and Communication (Amendment) Act, 2013, and the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation Act, should be reviewed by the end of 2022 to align them to the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 to ensure they serve the needs and interests of Kenyans.
9. **THAT** to reenergize the sector and address the recommendations an interim Media Steering Committee has been selected to lead the Kenya Media Stakeholders Working Group. The substantive and inclusive committee will be elected by December 2021. The interim committee draws representatives from:
  1. Kenya Editors' Guild
  2. Kenya Union of Journalists
  3. Article 19 East Africa
  4. Media Council of Kenya
  5. Kenya Community Media Network
  6. Digital Broadcasters Association
  7. Association of Media Women in Kenya

The members that met under the auspices of the Kenya Media Stakeholders Working Group are party to this Declaration are:

1. Kenya Editors' Guild
2. Kenya Union of Journalists
3. Article 19 Eastern Africa
4. Media Council of Kenya
5. Communication Authority of Kenya
6. Medi Owners Association
7. Kenya Correspondents Association
8. Internews Kenya
9. Association of Media Women in Kenya
10. Defenders Coalition - Kenya.
11. Political Journalists Association of Kenya
12. Kenya Parliamentary Journalists Association
13. Kenya Environment and Science Journalists Association
14. Digital Broadcasters Association
15. Journalists for Human Rights
16. Association of Devolution Journalists
17. Association of Freelance Journalists
18. Kenya Community Media Network.