



Wynne Musabayana (Mrs.)

Head of Communication

Remarks at the opening ceremony of

World Press Freedom Day

3 May 2022

Arusha. Tanzania

1. Your Excellency Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, our guest of honour
 2. Honourable Minister of Information, Communication and Information Technology
 3. Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Information, Communication and Information Technology
 4. Excellences the Ambassador of Sweden, and the British High Commissioner, who is representing the Development Partners Group (DPG)
 5. The UN Resident Coordinator
 6. The UNESCO Regional Director
 7. Fellow communicators from the East African Community (EAC); the Africa Editors Forum (TAEF); the East Africa Editors Society (EAES); the Tanzania Editors Forum (TEF), and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA)
 8. Colleagues from the media
 9. Ladies and gentlemen
- At the outset, allow me to sincerely thank, on behalf of the African Union, H.E President Suluhu Hassan and the government and people of this great nation, for the excellent preparations for the celebrations of World Press Freedom Day 2022, under the theme “Journalism Under Digital Siege”.
 - For us, it is a mark of the importance attached to the role of media, that Her Excellency made time on Eid Il Fitr, to address us.
 - Your Excellency, from the time of our arrival, we have experienced nothing but the very best of the legendary Tanzanian hospitality, which has echoes of the pan Africanism that saw Tanzania selflessly support many of our countries to overcome colonialism and apartheid.

On behalf of the Director of Information and Communication Mrs. Leslie Richer, who was called away at the last minute, I would like to thank our partners UNESCO, for convening this event on the African continent, simultaneously with the world wide celebrations in Uruguay.

This day offers the perfect opportunity for us to sincerely appreciate the media’s dedication to telling the African story, including in difficult times such as the COVID19 pandemic; and to assure them that we will continue to facilitate their work.

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen.

It is important that we take charge of our narrative. This means busting those negative stereotypes; it means showcasing an Africa that is following through on its commitments to create the Africa we Want for ourselves and for future generations; openly discussing the challenges; and telling with pride, of our contributions to the world through the ages.

In our development as a continent, information is a critical resource as we collectively march towards prosperity, unity and peace under Agenda 2063. Information is a public good, and the media are central to ensuring that African citizens have access to it.

In this respect, your Union has created policy frameworks and soft laws to support media freedom and safety, key elements of the #WPF. These include:

- The Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa, reaffirms the importance of freedom of expression and access to information as individual human rights; as cornerstones of democracy, and as means of ensuring respect for other human rights.
- The Model Law on Access to Information;
- The Guidelines on Access to Information and Elections in Africa; and
- The African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection.

These documents are ours, they have been prepared for Africa by our experts and ministers, and have been approved at the highest level.

Further to this, the Union endeavours to **provide the media with the content it needs** through e.g.

- Continuous efforts to understand media requirements; creating, co creating and distributing content; branding the AU, and regularly adopting relevant new methods and platforms.
- Improving our media database –to ensure that journalists receive the information they need. The database will be an interactive tool that will enable journalists to submit their own expectations.
- Building the capacity of media through various training programmes. At this meeting e.g. we are sponsoring 4 journalists. This will give the celebrations

much wider visibility. In that group we also have community media journalists who will soon be attending a two day training workshop.

- Collaborations such as the current one with Netflix on the “Cape to Cairo” initiative as a way for media to create space for African content creators
- Preserving historic and current documents, images, audio and video materials of the Union, and making them available to users. Our desire is that African media starts to make more use of them.

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen.

I will conclude with a quote by one Charles de Lint, who says “Don’t forget that no one else sees the world the way you do, so no one can tell the stories that you have to tell”.

I thank you, and Eid Mubarak