

Engaging Media in Governance Reforms

A Thematic Area of the 10 to 10 Multi-Sector Governance Reform Campaign Festival
Convened by the Center for Community Journalism and Development

NATIONAL FORUM ON MEDIA GOVERNANCE, MEDIA IN GOVERNANCE

09 December 2004 SGV Hall, AIM Conference Center, Makati City

Executive Summary

The initiative brings together media practitioners and multi-sector organizations at the local and national levels to discuss and share ideas on how to more effectively contribute to governance reforms. It also aims to provide an opportunity and venue for the media to reflect on their roles and responsibilities in a governance context especially in relation to governance issues that may promote or impede the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.



Its major strategies and activities include the formation and convening of a Media Stakeholders' Working Group composed of different media organizations and associations to set directions and flesh out the design of the national forum; the conduct of studies and current reality dialogues on media behavior, attitudes and performance not only during the 2004 elections but also in other arenas of media engagement and its impact on governance; and, the holding of three island workshops on media's role in governance.

Aside from the main convener, Center for Community Journalism and Development (CCJD), the other members of the media stakeholders are the Asian Institute of Journalism (AIJC), Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR), Foundation for Media Alternatives (FMA), National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP), OFW Journalism Consortium (OFWJC), Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), Philippine Information Agency (PIA), Philippine Press Institute (PPI), and Women's Feature Service (WFS).

As a summing up activity of the initiative, the "National Forum on Media Governance, Media in Governance" presents and validates a framework for media engagement that looks beyond the 10 to

10 Campaign Festival by identifying sustainable strategies for media reforms that impact on governance. Among the strategies identified include the crafting of a multi-sector “Covenant for Media Engagement in Governance Reforms” to be ratified through a declaration in February 2005.

Its objectives:

- To allow participants have a better appreciation and understanding of the state of governance and the state of media in the Philippines;
- For participants to re-define media and multi-sector roles in contributing to reforms through participation in governance
- To identify and draw up a “do-able” media action agenda

Outputs of the three “Island Workshops on Media’s Role in Governance” held in Cebu, Davao and Pasig City over a span of three weeks were consolidated and integrated for presentation in the breakout sessions during the national forum.

“Do-able” actions and recommendations resulting from the island workshops:

Media	Multi-Sectors
<p><i>Luzon</i></p> <p>Publish and popularize monograph/pamphlet on media rights and code of ethics to address the issue of journalists’ welfare especially those working in the provinces.</p> <p>Publish survey results on media workers’ situation and hold safety training and workshops for journalists.</p> <p>Conduct community dialogues and media education campaigns to promote transparency and accountability in media work and recognize best practices in journalism.</p>	<p>Regular multi-sector forums or dialogues with media and alliance building (between media, government, other sectors) to highlight best practices in media work</p>
<p><i>Visayas</i></p> <p>Rewards/recognition for good journalism and support for research undertaken in pursuit of in-depth stories; awards for media employers/management for good practices.</p> <p>Reactivation of the Citizen-Press Council in Cebu and its development in Region 8.</p> <p>Regular dialogues with government and multi-sector groups in Western Samar.</p>	<p>Training for media on skills, values, issues and best practices award for media governance.</p> <p>Organize regular forums and dialogues with media owners to help build consensus on priorities of public good.</p>

<p>Continuing training for journalists on ethics and responsibility and popularization of code of ethics.</p> <p>Convene a Visayas Media Summit to discuss media welfare, best practices in media, continuing media education, killings of journalists, media ownership.</p>	
<p><i>Mindanao</i></p> <p>Strengthen, and widen participation in, the Mindanao Media Forum as mechanism for sustaining media and multi-sector unity, addressing issues on skills, professional and ethical standards of media.</p> <p>Support and widen participation in the regular, annual Mindanao Media Summit.</p>	<p>Promote sustainable community-based interaction between government and people through dialogues, media forums, etc.</p> <p>Encourage media to include “best practices” or “good governance” stories</p>

The December 9 National Forum on “Media Governance, Media in Governance,” attended by key representatives from the media, business, government, civil society, and international development partners, coincided with several national activities on human rights but had more than a hundred participants nonetheless.

Two main papers on the state of governance and state of media presented in the morning plenary provided context for the breakout sessions tackling the themes Media Governance, Media in Governance, and Specific Constituencies, Global Frameworks: Sector-Focused Media and Exploring a Right to Communicate.

Atty. Gil Fernando Cruz, Executive Director of the League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP), read the paper of Naga City Mayor Jesse Robredo, 2000 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee who was unable to come at the last minute, on how local constituencies can be further empowered through transparent and participatory governance.

Mr. Red Batario, Executive Director of the Center for Community Journalism and Development, talked about the state of media and presented 10 ideas for media engagement and reform as basis for discussion in the workshop groups.

Mr. Kyo Naka, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, in his welcome remarks on behalf of Ms. Deborah Landey, UNDP Resident Representative, underscored the key role of media in informing the poor and disadvantaged on the decisions and programs of government and how these affect their rights and freedoms.

The plenary presentations highlighted the critical importance of information through the news media in helping people make choices and informed decisions while citing the need not only for media to engage in governance reforms but to reform media as well.

In his inspirational talk, Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario G. Davide cited the efforts of the organizers in bringing together media, government and multi-sector groups to work out an agenda for engagement and reforms. The Chief Justice also encouraged the participants to look closely on how the media and the Supreme Court shared responsibilities in disseminating information as part of governance.

The outputs of the three breakout sessions were in the form of recommended action steps based on the island workshop outputs and plenary presentations. These were later consolidated into a draft covenant that will be formally signed in February 2005 in what will be known as the “Plaridel Declaration.”

The major highlights include the popularization of the media code of ethics, recognition for best practices in media (individuals and organizations), continuing values and skills training, legal assistance support for journalists in distress, regular media-multisector dialogues, strengthening of media self-regulatory bodies, review of TV ratings, support for media welfare (especially for community journalists and correspondents), business (especially advertising) to support good journalism.

FORUM PROCEEDINGS

Morning Plenary

The forum was attended by representatives from the media, business (including advertisers), government, civil society, and international development agencies including diplomatic representatives from the embassies of Germany, Britain, and Norway. A total of 120 participants joined the activity.

Opening ceremonies were slightly delayed by the late arrival of technical equipment like the LCD projectors and failure of venue staff to put up the backdrops the night before.

At 9:30 a.m. Fr. Herbert Camar, DWBS-AM Legazpi, Albay, led the ecumenical prayers followed by the singing of the National Anthem.

Ms. Connie Perfecto, Training Director of the Center for Community Journalism and Development, introduced the first speaker for the morning's session.

The main speakers were:

- Mr. Kyo Naka, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative – Welcome Remarks
- Hon. Jesse Robredo, Mayor of Naga City – Governance Reforms from an LGU Point of View (paper read by Atty. Gil Fernando Cruz, Executive Director, League of Cities of the Philippines)
- Mr. Red Batario, Executive Director, Center for Community Journalism and Development – Media Governance, Media in Governance

Welcome Remarks

Mr. Kyo Naka

Deputy Resident Representative

United Nations Development Programme

In his welcome remarks, Mr. Kyo Naka, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, reminded the audience about the forum being an important part of the “10 to 10 Governance Reform Campaign Festival and “a continuing advocacy that hopes to bind us together as a constituency to advance our goals for good governance.”

While underlining UNDP's advocacy campaign, Mr. Naka emphasized that the media have a key role in providing the means to inform the poor and disadvantaged groups about the agenda, decisions and activities of government and how these would affect their rights and freedoms. He said “information is key for people to make choices” and “having the right information helps people make beneficial choices and take the right course of action toward their own development.”

In closing Mr. Naka also extolled the important role of media in governance. He said: “A free, responsible and vigilant media is fundamental in enhancing the right to information and make the institutions of governance transparent and accountable. Media performs the vital tasks of informing, communicating and articulating the power of the public for their own empowerment to enable them to participate in governance and development. We at UNDP truly support the media and its role in keeping democracy alive in this country.”

Governance Reforms from an LGU Point of View

Hon. Jesse M. Robredo

Mayor, Naga City

Describing Naga City's good governance practices, Mayor Robredo pointed to how even the poorest of the city's citizens were able to identify their problems and look for solutions by being outspoken, organized and aware of their rights. He said this came about because Naga City encouraged citizens to be active and participate in governance by demanding that government respect citizens' rights.

"Because we have an empowered people, those that run the government are kept on their toes, making their moves accountable. And the best way to make it convenient for both sides is to make governance truly participative and transparent," he said.

He also said that as a result, strong partnerships have developed enabling the city to tap community resources in many major undertakings of the local government. He added that "working with the private sector and other community groups, for instance, has allowed the city government to multiply its capacity and overcome resource constraints. And listening to them and accommodating their inputs and voices in decision-making, we came up with various innovative programs and practices – from growth-oriented projects to those meant to mainstream the poor in development."

Mayor Robredo then cited Naga City's procurement practices that focus not only on guidelines and procedures but more importantly on the people working on and who are affected by the system. He said the procurement system worked for the city government because the LGU focused on building an enabling environment, improving the transparency of the procurement process, encouraging the participation of qualified entities in the selection process, and, lowering the cost of doing business with the city government.

Media Governance, Media in Governance

Mr. Red Batario

Executive Director

Center for Community Journalism and Development

Citing numerous studies and outputs of conferences conducted in the past, Mr. Batario described the media situation as bad but tempered by redeeming qualities. He said that while media had always been accused of superficiality, sensationalism, tastelessness, incompetence, and corruption efforts are also being undertaken to address those issues.

He said that while those in government, civil society, business, media owners and other sectors constantly rail against the failings of media, they have also contributed in one way or another to the dire situation. He pointed out that during elections politicians go on a media-buying spree, advertisers dictate the news agenda by using ratings as gauge for radio-TV program survival, while media owners continue to turn a blind eye on their employees' welfare.

"We want the media on our side but only when we can influence them to articulate our own agenda. We damn the media for their sensationalist tendencies and yet continue to drive the ratings up by patronizing shows that dumb us," he said.

He also reminded participants that the practice of journalism should be balanced between profit and mission and that there is a need to support good journalism. He then quoted Pope John Paul II's

message in the June 2000 declaration of the Holy Year Day for Journalists: “With its vast and direct influence on public opinion, journalism cannot be guided only by economic forces, profit, and special interest. It must instead be felt as a mission in a certain sense sacred, carried out in the knowledge that the powerful means of communication have been entrusted to you for the good of all.”

Mr. Batario then presented 10 ideas for mapping out strategies that the forum may take on as a challenge:

1. Promote a dialogue on issues that can help build consensus on the priorities of public good
2. Project lessons from partnerships between citizens and governments in addressing governance issues especially those that impact on the Millennium Development Goals
3. Develop a journalism paradigm that looks at the public not merely as audience but as intended outcome
4. Encourage advertising support for news organizations that promote good journalism
5. Effect a balance between press freedom and responsibility; between profit and mission
6. Form media alliances especially at the local level that will carry the voices of the poor and disenfranchised
7. Support and encourage the establishment of a guild that would focus on the welfare of journalists throughout the Philippines
8. Support and advocate for access to information legislation and other laws that impact on media coverage and citizens’ right to know
9. Develop a Viewers’ and Listeners’ Bill of Rights that outlines what citizens should expect from radio and television
10. Strengthen the Philippine Press Council at the national level and Citizen-Press Councils at the local level as feedback mechanism for newspapers

Concurrent Workshops

Three concurrent workshops were convened at 10:30 a.m. to validate the island workshop outputs and recommend action steps that can be undertaken by the forum. Three guide questions were formulated and posed to the workshop participants: (1) How can we strengthen the role of media in good governance? Or, how can we strengthen the partnership between media and the other sectors? (2) Why are these issues being given priority? (3) Who will initiate the recommended action steps?

Breakout Session 1: Media Governance

SGV Hall, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 noon

Resource Persons:

- Mr. Rey Hulog, Executive Director, Kapisanan ng mga Brodkasters ng Pilipinas – “Media Self-Regulation through the KBP Standards Authority”
- Mr. Jose Pavia, Executive Director, Philippine Press Institute – “Revitalizing the Philippine Press Council”
- Ms. Melinda Quintos de Jesus, Executive Director, Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility – “Monitoring Media in the 2004 Elections”
- Ms. Inday Espina-Varona, Chair, National Union of Journalists of the Philippines – “Working for Journalists’ Welfare”

Facilitator: Ms. Connie Perfecto, CCJD

Documenter: Ms. Julie Javellana-Santos, OFWJC

Workshop Participants:

1. David Viehland – UCANews
2. Ma. Fe A. Cabral – National Anti-Poverty Commission
3. Tess Abesamis – Business World
4. J.I. Angeles – USAID
5. Eva F. Cardenas – World Bank
6. Jay-Anne Dancel – Pro-Solutions (PR Agency)
7. Jose A. Torres Jr. – ABS-CBN Interactive
8. Con-Con San Antonio – Office of Senator Francisco Pangilinan
9. Lilian B. dela Cruz – Barefoot Advocates
10. Dodie C. Banzuela – Deretso Balita (San Pablo City)
11. Fr. Herbert Camar – DWBS-AM Legazpi City
12. Francis Jude S. Lauengco – NSC
13. Patrick Adams San Juan – Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement
14. Ka Poning Tolentino – Urban Land Reform Task Force
15. Carol Carmelo – UST Journalism Society
16. Rosemarie Aguilar – NEDA
17. Ma. Mel Doria – ABS-CBN Current Affairs
18. Bobby Manzano – Coca Cola Export Corporation Media Affairs

Summary of Proceedings

Mr. Rey Hulog, Executive Director of the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkasters ng Pilipinas gave the first presentation. His topic was “Media Self-Regulation through the KBP Standards Authority” that focused on the efforts of the KBP to institute reforms and monitor industry performance especially in relation to ethical practices.

Mr. Hulog also discussed some constraints faced by the KBP in imposing self-regulatory measures citing the example of broadcast organizations that simply resigned from the body to escape being sanctioned. Some workshop participants expressed disbelief that the KBP cannot actually impose sanctions on its members.

In discussing the topic “Revitalizing the Philippine Press Council,” Mr. Jose Pavia said that during a meeting of the Philippine Press Institute Board of Directors, it was decided to expand the membership of the Council. Mr. Pavia, Executive Director of the Philippine Press Institute (PPI), said that the Council works both as a complaints board and as a mechanism to address issues raised by the public against newspapers.

He also said that the PPI at one time brought together top officials of newspapers and news publications to a roundtable discussion with members of the Council to flesh out strategies for strengthening the body. Representatives from the academe and business were also invited as Council members to make for better citizen representation.

The third presentation on Monitoring Media through Citizen Press Councils underlined the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility's (CMFR) project on monitoring media performance. Ms. Melinda Quintos de Jesus, Executive Director of the CMFR, said that one outcome of the project was the formation of Citizen Press Councils in Baguio City, Cebu City and Puerto Princesa City in Palawan. The project also monitored media performance in the 2004 elections.

She said the Councils were organized so that complaints against press abuses raised at the regional level need not be brought to Manila and that at present the CMFR was still trying to raise public awareness about the existence and purpose of the Councils.

Ms. Inday Espina-Varona, Chair of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) was the last speaker. She tackled the topic on "Filipino Journalists' Welfare" by providing the participants an update on the efforts of the NUJP in addressing the various welfare concerns of its members and chapters throughout the Philippines.

Ms. Espina-Varona also showed through an illustrative presentation the economic and financial status of media practitioners in Manila and the provinces.

Open Forum

Ms. Jay-Ann Dancel on the question of why the PPI does not have the same regulatory powers as the KBP to suspend erring journalists:

Mr. Pavia responded by saying that the PPI's mandate was to defend and uphold press freedom and that it does so by holding training programs for journalists and media officers of government agencies.

Mr. Hulog added that although they are able to suspend erring members "the laws are only as strong as the commitment of each member." He added that some members who cannot comply with the KBP rules simply leave the organization citing two cases (Bombo Radyo and GMA 7).

Ms. De Jesus said that the PPI and KBP cannot be compared because there is a fundamental difference between print and broadcast. For one thing, she said that those companies that go into broadcasting follow a regulatory framework – that of the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) which controls Philippine airwaves.

She added that many complaints against the broadcast community have also been filed before the NTC while newspapers have their respective codes of ethics some of which punish by dismissal members' involvement in unethical practices.

Mr. Pavia likewise said that the "public is not really aware that they can complain" against press abuses.

Ms. Mel Doria on the lack of contracts between talents (reporters) and television news organizations:

Ms. Espina-Varona explained that some journalists wanted to remain simply as talents because of the hefty pay but “we want all journalists to be aware of their colleagues’ situation.”

Mr. Jose Torres, Jr. said the reporters surveyed were regular employees and not “contractuals” or talents. Mr. Torres is also with the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines.

Ka Poning Tolentino commenting on media welfare said that many journalists do not even own houses:

Ms. Espina-Varona said that most members of the media are not covered by PhilHealth (or other medical plans) and Pag-Ibig housing plans and therefore are unable to acquire houses. “We’re caught between a stone and a hard place,” she added.

Fr. Herbert Camar asking what the KBP can do to regulate broadcasters who are not members of the association:

Non-KBP members are subject to NTC (National Telecommunications Commission) rules, said Mr. Hulog, adding that the KBP has an agreement with the NTC regarding the issue. But there is no mechanism for complaints about non-members. “They can write the NTC but very few people know that they can do so,” he said.

On program talents, Mr. Hulog said that there is no assurance of permanency of employment unlike technicians who operate the radio transmitters although the KBP “is trying its best to cover all employees, not just announcers.”

Workshop Recommendations

The workshop participants divided their recommendations into three major themes or issues:

1. *Training and Professionalization*

- a. Strengthen networking and partnership among media organizations
- b. Provide periodic values and skills trainings through different media organizations
- c. Establish an accreditation system for media practitioners (long term option – media licensing)
- d. Establish a citizens’ media watch
- e. Popularize the media code of ethics
- f. Recognize “best practices” through journalism awards for both media organizations and individual practitioners

Mr. Bobby Manzano of the Coca Cola Export Corporation Media Relations said values training actually mattered more than skills training.

There was also an extended discussion on licensing as opposed to accreditation. Mr. Jolan Angeles of USAID said the fact that the accreditation would be voluntary would mean that a broadcaster or journalist has some level of professionalism.

Mr. Dodie Banzuela of *Deretso Balita* said licensing should be similar to those being required of doctors but Mr. Angeles said licensing media practitioners would mean de facto censorship.

Ms. Mel Doria added that there are already several agencies that could provide accreditation and that these could be merged instead of creating a new one.

On how to influence values in three years, Mr. Manzano suggested that citizens' media watch be encouraged to increase public vigilance on media performance while Mr. Pavia said that popularizing the code of ethics could encourage people to come forward to complain about media abuses.

On best practices awards, concern was raised by Ms. Jay-Ann Dancel about the risk of duplicating the Jaime V. Ongpin Awards for Investigative Journalism but Mr. Rosemarie Aguilar of NEDA said "recognizing can actually uplift the standards of the profession."

Ms. Dancel also suggested that the awards be made issue-specific or thematic to be spread out to local or regional newspapers. "We should level the playing field and make it more democratic."

Ms. Fe Cabral of NAPC said more space should also be provided for poverty and social issues to highlight "best practices" and "Increase the level of awareness of the government's effort in addressing poverty." She also said that there should be a seminar to raise media awareness on poverty-related issues.

2. Media Welfare

- a. Encourage the formation of multi-purpose cooperatives or give micro-finance access to media practitioners
- b. Pursue a housing program through the help of the Urban Land Reform Task Force
- c. Set up legal assistance bureaus possibly through the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) with the help of the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG), and the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP).

Participants said that media cooperatives are already established in Mindanao so forming one elsewhere will not be difficult. Ka Poning Tolentino on the other hand said that the ULR-TF could mediate between media groups and Vice-President Noli de Castro who also heads the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCC) for socialized housing for journalists.

Ms. Dancel also cited the example of the Economic Journalists Association of the Philippines (EJAP) which was able to develop a low-cost townhouse project in Project 8, Quezon City in the early 1990s.

On setting up legal assistance bureaus, participants said these could help in the prosecution of cases of slain journalists and provide advice on other legal issues like libel and labor disputes.

Ms. Lilian dela Cruz of the Barefoot Advocates said most media companies have their own legal departments but Ms. Dancel said that sometimes media companies themselves are the subject of complaints hence the need for an independent legal bureau.

3. Other Recommendations

- a. Regular consultations with different people's organizations on areas of concern
- b. Seek KBP action on limiting airtime of "telenovelas" and keep news programs within prime time (up to 10 p.m. only) to encourage media to uplift the Filipino quality of life
- c. Media training for non-media personnel

Ms. Eva Cardenas of the World Bank said media must be more creative in encouraging entrepreneurial activity among the public in relation to uplifting quality of life through the media.

On media training for non-media personnel, Mr. Angeles said USAID's tuberculosis awareness program asked Inquirer columnist Rina Jimenez David how the project can best present tuberculosis for this to be taken up as a continuing issues in newspapers.

Breakout Session 2: Media in Governance

Jose N. Concepcion Sr. Room, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 noon

Resource Persons:

- Mr. Ramon Tuazon, Vice-President, Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication – "Media and Transparency in the Judiciary"
- Ms. Sheila Coronel, Executive Director, Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism – "Reporting that Leads to Governance Reforms"
- Ms. Ma. Diosa Labiste, Editorial Consultant, *The Visayas Examiner* and Ms. Yasmin Arquiza, Publisher, *Bandillo ng Palawan* – "Governance Engagement thru Public Journalism"

Facilitator: Ms. Resurrecion Alip, Development Academy of the Philippines

Documenter: Ms. Pinky Choudhury, Freelance Journalist

Participants:

1. Ms. Betty Lou Penera, Philippine Information Agency
2. Ms. Grace Agoncillo, Philippine Information Agency
3. Mr. Wilson Villanueva, CESB, Civil Service Commission
4. Ms. Marites Ballesteros, Department of Tourism
5. Ms. Myn Garcia, Local Government Support Program, Canada
6. Ms. Eva Pastrana, European Commission, Good Governance Program
7. Representative from Finnish Embassy
8. Mr. Robinson K. Cedre, Barefoot Advocates and PCPV Channel 11
9. Mr. Paul L. Manalo, Barefoot Advocates
10. Mr. Ermin Garcia, Sinag ng Bayan Foundation
11. Mr. Max de Mesa, Task Force Detainees of the Philippines
12. Mr. Ces Azucena Jr., Professor of Labor Laws, UP and Ateneo
13. Mr. Aries Matibag, Far Eastern University
14. Ms. Belinda Espiritu, UP College of Mass Communication
15. Mr. Rey David, Great Wall Advertising
16. Mr. Jose Torres Jr., ABS-CBN On-Line
17. Ms. Iris Cecilia Gonzales, BusinessWorld
18. Mr. Mar dela Cruz, PBV-DZGB Legazpi City

Summary of Proceedings

The facilitator at 10:30 a.m. welcomed the workshop participants and briefed them on the flow of the morning's activity before introducing the resource speakers.

On the topic "A Ruling for Transparency," the first speaker, Mr. Ramon Tuazon, talked about how the judiciary has taken the lead in moving towards greater transparency and accessibility. There were four main points in his presentation: understanding the culture and organizational structure of the Court; why there is a need for transparency within the Court system; the role of the mass media and the judiciary; and, the AIJC experience in engaging media NGOs in governance.

The challenge, he said, is to resolve the tension between the desire for greater transparency and the value given to the maintenance of what the Chief Justice, Hilario G. Davide Jr., describes as comfortable distance to give an image of impartiality and independence. The tension is within the Court itself.

On communicating with its external publics, Mr. Tuazon quoted Chief Justice Davide's mission and vision statement: "The Bench must be fully accountable to the public by remaining transparent, yet not betray those aspects of the judicial process which require utmost confidentiality."

A key strategy for judicial transparency according to Mr. Tuazon, citing reports from the Action Program for Judicial Reforms (APJR), is media support. But the mass media is different from the Court in terms of openness because of the public's right to know; this is a difference that the media and the judiciary have recognized as a result of cross-country dialogues conducted by the AIJC.

Another difference, he said, is that mass media is concerned about impact and outcome while the judiciary is concerned with process and confidentiality. But both have to work towards a common goal – to seek the truth – and complement each other.

He identified several contentious issues with media like violations of the *sub judice* rule, the right to reply, entry of TV cameras in the courtroom, focus on personalities rather than issues, bias in favor of sensational cases, inadequate and inaccurate reporting, lack of in-depth analysis, preference for negative stories. He said that journalists have also identified several weaknesses such as the lack of zeal and determination in following up cases, voluminous documents which are boring and hard to understand, and unfamiliarity with legal jargon.

Ms. Sheila Coronel, in discussing the topic "Reporting that Leads to Governance Reforms: The Prospects for Investigative Reporting in the Philippines," began by saying that "Basically we all know that there is a vicious cycle. Government is often perceived as so inefficient and corrupt but many Filipinos believe that the fear of media exposure is one deterrent to corruption and abuse. The coverage of the case of Gen. Garcia can pressure the government."

She said that investigative reporting can help break the cycle of corruption by:

- Revealing the flaws in the government machinery; exposing who is responsible and explaining what can be done;
- Putting the issue of reform on the news agenda;
- Naming and shaming, especially when corruption takes place with impunity and those who are really guilty are brought to justice;
- Catalyzing dramatic changes like resignation of corrupt officials;
- Featuring the work of reform-minded individuals and groups like NGOs;
- Showing citizens what they can do about corruption;

- Forcing individuals and institutions to be transparent and accountable.

Some stories may be difficult to do Ms. Coronel said “but this does not mean we should not do them. It is actually a mix of simple yet scandalous ones which succeed.”

She also said that the media should try to build on their skills to do more complex stories and also try to slowly build more interest in complex stories like smuggling. She encouraged the participants to respond to the challenge of new, more sophisticated forms of corruption involving the stock market and money laundering; crime and the underworld; corporate wrongdoing; systemic rather than individual wrongdoings; how to compete in a profit-oriented media market; how to succeed in getting support for investigators; and, how to make investigations more appealing and urgent.

In discussing “Governance Engagement through Public Journalism,” Ms. Yasmin Arquiza of *Bandillo ng Palawan*, and Ms. Ma. Diosa Labiste of *The Visayas Examiner*, talked about their respective experiences in engaging government and other sectors through public journalism.

Ms. Arquiza talked about how her paper is making a difference in community journalism by adapting the principles of public journalism in the practice of the craft. She cited several activities like the Candidates’ Forum, *Ulat ng Bayan* (Report of the People) and the multi-sectoral forum in the 2004 elections called *Suriin Bago Piliin* (Check before Choosing) that involved both journalists and citizens in a civic enterprise that led to informed discussions of electoral platforms and issues in the province of Palawan.

She also presented some examples of *Bandillo ng Palawan’s* public journalism section called **Tuturan** (meaning “important message” in the Palawan dialect) that included probing stories on women’s issues, the environment, human rights, and the rights-based approach to education, health, food security.

Ms. Ma. Diosa Labiste, on the other hand, explained how and why *The Visayas Examiner* embraced public journalism as its own philosophy. She narrated how the paper began experimenting with public journalism in July 2001 by holding community discussions on the hazards posed by a hospital incinerator in Iloilo City and exploring other methods of increasing public awareness on local governance issues.

She said that in 2003 the paper made a “big, bold move” to use public journalism in all its pages and how it has created an impact on the community that TVE serves:

- Encouraged public participation through the paper’s coverage of and reportage on local issues, and through public forums and discussions facilitated by the paper;
- Small newspapers are pooling resources to improve the quality of their craft and making them more relevant to the community (connecting with citizens as stakeholders and members of the community);
- Media learned how to listen carefully and be sensitive to community needs and consultations through dialogues, focus group discussions, and facilitated forums allowed citizens to identify community problems and solutions.

Open Forum

On considering lifestyle checks on the media:

Ms. Coronel said that there is no law governing the media on disclosure of assets and there are no clear laws about corruption. “So you will have to focus on the media organization which will have to create their laws and functions for investigating or Congress will have to create a special law.”

Mr. Rey David, raising the question on allowing foreign media conglomerates to come in, even partially, so we can enrich and balance the contents of media:

Even if foreign media were to come in we would still get entertainment stories like the tele-dramas, said Mr. Tuazon. Mr. David added that “tele-aralan” types of programs years ago were very interesting and informative.

Mr. Max de Mesa posing a question on pushing human rights as well as quality of life as issues for media:

Write about human rights not only when there are massacres but also about the “justiciability” of human rights; make stories on hunger more interesting; educate the public, including children, on human rights and on child rights; incorporate child rights education in all levels of schooling; write more about alternative medicine as an issue of access and right to good health.

Mr. Ermin Garcia, observing how Filipinos have short memories about scandals and exposes:

His recommendation is to use data gathered (including those from PCIJ data base on corruption) so media organizations as well as communities can use them. Mr. Tuazon said that “we should find out the status of the bill on whistleblowers on corrupt activities.”

Mr. Rey David, responding to the issue of the tax classification bill pending in the Lower House, said “let’s televise hearings of the Committee on Ways and Means. Or is it a matter of national security?”

Workshop Recommendations

On the issue of lack of information, the participants recommended that a data base on corruption be made available to everyone including small news organizations and that research institutions be linked with media.

To protect the integrity of information, the group suggested that a network to access and share data be formalized.

On the question of ethics in media the recommendation was to support advocacy for media professionalization while support for community media in the form of advertising and legislation was recommended to respond to the issue of media survival and lack of resources (for those operating in the provinces).

There is likewise a need to popularize local issues and rationalize content of information through the establishment by NGOs of community radio.

Another recommended action was to build positive relationship between/among government, private sector and the media.

To improve the practice of journalism, Workshop 3 participants recommended that media institutions conduct regular training and the honing of journalists' skills while pursuing media education for citizens.

***Breakout Session 3: Specific Constituencies, Global Frameworks:
Sector-Focused Media and Exploring a Right to Communicate***

Metrobank Room, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 noon

Resource Persons:

- Mr. Jeremaih Opiniano, Founding President, OFW Journalism Consortium – “Journalism in the Phenomenon of Migration”
- Ms. Olive Tripon, Executive Director, Women’s Feature Service – “Reporting on Women and Gender Issues”
- Mr. Alan Alegre, Executive Director, Foundation for Media Alternatives – “Communication Rights as Arena for Engagement”

Facilitator: Ms. Alicia Lourdes de Guzman, CCJD Consultant
Documenter: Ms. Cheryl Ingles, Research Associate, FMA

Participants:

1. Ms. Teresa Abesamis, Business World
2. Ms. Susan Balane, DWRS-Radio Veritas
3. Ms. Geraldine Joy Bringas, DZPA-CMN
4. Mr. Abner Francisco, DXCA-Puso ng Bayan
5. Mr. Doods Marianito, PBN-DZMS
6. Mr. Mahros Abano, Barefoot Advocates
7. Ms. Chit Arma, Task Force Detainees of the Philippines
8. Ms. Lileth Bobiles, CCAGG
9. Mr. Mar Canonigo, Sinag ng Bayan Foundation
10. Mr. Gerry Josue, Commission on Appointments
11. Mr. Lorenzo Navales, Manulife
12. Ms. Monica Pagunsan, Department of Justice
13. Ms. Luz Lopez Rodriguez, UNIFEM-CEDAW
14. Ms. Maureen Terrado, PROSolutions
15. Ms. Helen R. Tibaldo, Philippine Information Agency
16. Mr. Ross Villamil, Pulse Asia, Inc.
17. Mr. Polly Dichoso, Evelio B. Javier Foundation, Inc.

Summary of Proceedings:

The facilitator gave a brief overview about the objectives of the workshop and introduction of the participants after which she asked the participants to introduce themselves by giving a brief description of their tasks and their respective organizations.

The first presenter, Mr. Jeremaiah Opiniano of the OFW Journalism Consortium, said that one of the biggest problems that a media-generated approach faces is that to many media outfits, news stories from civil society are still not being recognized as news worthy. However, he said that media appears to be acknowledging the fact that civil society plays a key role in governance.

He also stressed the importance of using multi-media technology to advance sector-specific advocacies by citing the experience of the OFWJC in producing news packets containing in-depth stories. The news packets are distributed for free and may be replicated and localized by others in their community's own language.

Mr. Opiniano said that partnership between media and civil society used to seem like a farfetched idea but that it now appears to be working in several instances. As a result he said, people are now starting to pay attention to migrant stories and that OFW sections already exist in several newspapers.

He said that migrant concerns are important because the issue of migration cuts across all sectors. He added that the OFWJC model is replicable and that he is encouraging others to form their own groups and write their own stories without compromising journalistic values.

Speaking on the topic "Reporting on Women and Gender Issues," Ms. Olive Tripon of the Women's Feature Service said that while the WFS aims to empower women so they can become self-governing, it also endeavors to educate men to change their attitude and behavior towards women.

"The WFS tries to show women's perspectives in all issues by giving stories to the mainstream media to foster awareness and enhance the value of women's role in society," she said.

WFS believes that journalists should not be mere spectators but should also be stakeholders in society, emphasizing that it is important for the media to form partnerships with NGOs and local governments and that media and civil society can actually work as partners.

She stressed the need for "transformative media governance" wherein the old thinking that women who are doing positive things are not news worthy has to be junked. "Editors must be convinced that news on women also makes for good copy and that this can also sell because a great part of the population is composed of women," Ms. Tripon concluded.

Mr. Alan Alegre of the Foundation for Media Alternatives prefaced his presentation with the question: "Is freedom of expression enough in guaranteeing the people's right to be heard, listened and responded to?"

He said that FOE alone is not enough because Filipinos do live as equally empowered individuals. Most of the time, the voices of those in control or are powerful in society are the only ones that are often heard.

Mr. Alegre explained that Communication Rights are "meta rights" that could only be possible through the realization of enabling rights. It is also necessary that other potential barriers to the completion of the communication cycle be eliminated.

He also talked about “trends” that showed the need for a Communication Rights advocacy, saying that while it is true that technological advances serve as a boost to the right to Freedom of Expression, they failed to lead to media diversity and plurality. These trends are:

- a. Corporate media dominance
- b. Identity and culture (media commercialization affects not only content but homogenization of identity and cultural expression as well)
- c. Copyright and enclosure of knowledge
- d. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Universal Service (these gave rise to greater digital divide)

Open Forum

Mr. Polly Dichoso of the EBJF asked how communication rights can be presented at the local level and how it can be adopted as an advocacy. He also expressed disappointment at not hearing more “best practices” in local governance and citizen participation:

Mr. Opiniano said that there are already many stories written about migrants and their involvement in local governance. He cited the experience of local communities in Romblon wherein a counterpart group was adopted by migrants in Illinois. These groups work together to support local development projects and have drafted an alternative provincial development plan. It was submitted to the provincial government but met with some resistance because of “mindsets.” He added that OFWJC is trying to document more “best practices” similar to the Romblon experience.

On the issue of communication rights, Mr. Alegre clarified that most of the “best practices” stories are about the use of ICTs for development citing the example of effective local e-governance. He said that local governments are also putting up telecenters in different barangays all over the country and that “there is a lot of movement in terms of using ICTs for local development.”

Comment of Mr. Mar Canonigo that the media’s main mission is to fight corruption in governance but is incapable of doing so “because media itself is teeming with corruption so who would watch the Fourth Estate to keep it from committing abuses?:”

Mr. Opiniano replied that the issue is already being discussed in the other breakout groups but agreed that it is also important that they talk about it in their own session. “While we are dealing with sector-specific media in this workshop, I think all the more that these kinds of groups such as ours should also go along those lines. There are also governance and corruption issues in our sectors.”

The facilitator said that the question is a good jump-off point for the workshop proper.

Mr. Alegre added that consumers’ movements play a key role in making the media more accountable citing the Tanduay (a local rum) “Kinse-Anyos” ad as an example. He also said that Milo (manufacturer of a popular chocolate drink) had one TV ad pulled out after protests circulated through the mailing lists of NGOs reached advertisers. “They also listen to critical comments and protests.” He added that the community media are also important and have to be supported (through funding and other strategies) “because potentially they are effective tools in improving local governance.

He also said that media literacy for audiences should be pursued and media issues addressed on a larger scale. “Have you ever heard of Channel 2 tackling the Maynilad issue? (Channel 2 and Maynilad are owned by the Lopez family) It’s a public interest issue. Cross-ownership, especially of public utilities, is a major Communication Rights issue just as censorship is an issue.”

He added that the low income of journalists is one big factor that feeds corruption among journalists.

Mr. Ross Villamil of Pulse Asia, Inc. said that based on one of their surveys, TV ownership in the Philippines is 75 percent and 95 percent in the National Capital Region. He said he finds it ironic that the two major networks that enjoy the biggest TV audience share and have the greatest capacity to influence public opinion did not even have representatives in the forum and that “it remains a ratings and revenue game.”

Mr. Lorenzo Navales added that advertisers should have joined the forum as well because “they have the power to influence program content.”

The facilitator clarified that media owners and representatives from major media organizations and advertising groups have been invited.

Workshop Recommendations

The facilitator showed the participants the 10 strategic options suggested by Mr. Red Batario in the morning plenary. She also read the outputs of each island workshop and that national forum participants could use these suggestions to come up with their own ideas.

She also reminded the body that the sectors are not limited to women and OFWs and that there are others worthy of media coverage but are left out most of the time.

Identified issues to be prioritized:

- a. Media innumeracy – educating and upgrading the skills of media practitioners
- b. Corruption in media – beholden to interests of businessmen and politicians
- c. How media can create a critical populace
- d. Lack of appreciation of media relations
- e. Information, Educations, and Communication (IEC) appreciation/utilization
- f. Inadequate media education among the citizenry
- g. Values formation
- h. “Envelopmental” journalism
- i. Increase focus on women’s issues in the local media
- j. How to mainstream human rights
- k. How to break off the unequal access to power which hinders equal expression/communication
- l. Sexist and other discriminatory language
- m. Children’s issues and concerns
- n. Department created to protect a developing media (the participants suggested that only the people present in the workshop should be given tasks or should form committees)
- o. Review Advertising Board policies and regulations
- p. Form local media council to check media abuses
- q. National media should have regional perspective of issues (focus on tri-peoples i.e. Christian, Moro, indigenous peoples)
- r. Consumer education campaign (“let more people know that we get from media what we support/demand”)

- s. Media self-regulation vis-à-vis corruption
- t. Sincere effort on the part of government and media to address graft and corruption
- u. Giving voice (access to media) to marginalized groups especially Indigenous Peoples

Other important points

Mr. Gerry Josue of the Commission on Appointments said the solutions/suggestions discussed in the workshop should be articulated or sent to committees that will confirm the appointment of new Cabinet officials (such as the Press Secretary). He also said that he belongs to a group that holds conferences for teachers of communication and that such an initiative should be popularized to help ensure that future media practitioners are taught the proper skills demanded by the profession.

- Mr. Ross Villamil said that more focus should be given to small media initiatives like OFWJC and WFS since not many people are aware of them.
- He also backed the innumeracy issue since many journalists err when interpreting data which results in wrong information being given to the public. (“Pang headline lang o pang sound bite ang kinukuha pero hindi naman yun ang complete story. Kaya tuloy minsan nababatikos kami.”) He said Pulse Asia is willing to give data interpretation workshops to reporters for free.
- Ms. Monica Pagunsan of the Justice Department maintained that instead of giving so much focus on media as source of information, the public also has to be taught to appreciate what media are doing and the public also has a role in creating reforms in society. “It is not only the media that are the sources of information. If you go to the Cordillera or other provinces in far-flung areas they don’t even have television or other forms of media. That is why we have to create a community information network.”
- Ms. Geraldine Bringas of DZPA-CMN said that the fight against public apathy should be strengthened.
- Mr. Polly Dichoso added that programming schedule is part of a strategy that media operators use to influence and create demand. Shows that have more entertainment value are aired on prime time while educational or public affairs shows are aired either very early in the morning or late at night. He said the Law of Supply and Demand has already been reversed because media now have the power to create demand.
- Ms. Chit Arma of the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines said that the industry can come up with shows that feature good content but nobody watches it. “Kaya daw ganyan ka-basura ang media, kasi yan lang naman daw ang level ng Pinoy. Mother Lily will not produce a movie on reproductive health or violence against women but she will fund a movie like “Lastikman” because it is something that can rake in the income.”
- The facilitator also mentioned the difficulty media employees often face: irregularity of employment status. The participants agreed that most employees especially in the broadcast industry work for years without getting “regularized” and not getting statutory benefits regular employees enjoy.
- The suggestion that some sort of Professional Regulatory Commission to ensure professional standards in media be created was not adopted by the body.

- Ms. Lileth Bobiles from the CCAGG related the experience of a journalist in Abra who tried to submit an article about good governance in the province. The article was turned down by the editor who asked the journalist to instead come up with something more interesting. When she wrote something very critical, the story landed on the front page, enjoying good reception from the public. “But now when people talk of Abra they also talk of illegal loggers or the NPA. The other point is missed. For example, the CCAGG is internationally recognized for pursuing good governance, we have an integrity award, but the media would not want to buy our kind of story.”

Recommendations for plenary presentation

- a. Values education and formation
- b. Creation/strengthening of existing bodies to regulate media (from the ranks of media practitioners and empowered citizens; establishment of councils or bodies to check media abuses)
- c. Continuing education for media practitioners particularly on specific sectoral and regional concerns (e.g. indigenous peoples, women, etc.)
- d. Capacity building/empowerment of civil society for greater participation in media governance
- e. Look into the legislation surrounding granting of franchises to broadcast stations (it hampers the growth of community media in the provinces)
- f. Segmentize concerns/advocacies

Plenary Session

The afternoon plenary was keynoted by Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario G. Davide, Jr. who told the participants that the media and the judiciary share responsibilities in information dissemination as part of governance. He said that both institutions share common goals “the most basic of which are truth and justice; and common values such as integrity, independence, fairness, accountability and transparency.”

He said the judiciary recognizes the media’s thrust to keep the public informed of matters affecting their lives “consistent with the Constitutionally-guaranteed right to information and freedom of the press. As the so-called Fourth Estate, the media has an inestimable influence on the public and its perception about anything and everything they bring to light. Without exaggeration, this spells great power to the media as what they report ultimately affects the perceptions and decisions of the public.”

The Chief Justice also exhorted the media to conscientiously discharge their role “as the fourth estate and watchdog of the State and the Government.”

The well-applauded inspirational message of Chief Justice Davide was followed by a dramatized presentation of the outputs of the three island workshops on media’s role in governance by the Ateneo-based Entablados, a theater group.

The three outputs, culled from workshops held in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, were articulated by an actor portraying the role of a journalist working in very trying conditions, facing the dilemma of doing good journalism and possibly losing his job.

Serving as a trigger for the plenary discussion of the morning’s breakout sessions, the Entablos presentation also injected a moment of light introspection among the participants who took up the challenge for supporting better journalism and good governance posed by the actor. Everyone agreed

that the recommendations of the three island workshops and the morning's breakout sessions should be consolidated in a draft covenant that can later be signed by the national forum participants.

A suggestion from the Executive Director of the Philippine Press Institute, Mr. Jose Pavia, that the covenant be called the Plaridel Declaration and signed in the hero's shrine in Bulacan, was carried. The Declaration is set to be signed sometime in February 2005 in simple ceremonies that will include a follow-through forum to be designed by the Media Stakeholders Working Group and other National Forum participants.

In his closing prayer, Mr. Jolan Angeles of USAID said that many of the participants came to the forum with set biases against the media but at the end of the discussions found many points of agreement and convergence. He said that while there were many contentious issues and different agenda, the National Forum opened a rare opportunity for the multi-sector participants to forge a strategy and framework for media reforms that will impact on governance as a whole.

The launching of the book "Breaking the Norms: Philippine Community Media Innovations through Public Journalism" published by the Center for Community Journalism and Development and dinner cocktails formally ended the one-day forum.

Draft Covenant for Media in Governance Reforms

We, the representatives of the media, business sector, academe, government and civil society do hereby agree and commit ourselves to abide by, pursue and sustain the 10 –Point Covenant for Media Governance and Media in Governance as a framework for our long-term commitment to support governance reforms in the Philippines;

That we have discussed and integrated in the framework the recommendations of multi-sector participants of the Island Workshops on Media's Role in Governance held in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao;

As representatives of multi-sector groups and as citizens, we also believe that the media have a very important and critical role to play in ensuring that reform efforts do not falter along way. However, for media to effectively and meaningfully play that role, reforms need to be undertaken within the sector;

Therefore, we hereby formalize this commitment through a collective statement called the Plaridel Declaration embodying the principles of good journalism as a strategy and mechanism for promoting good governance and sustaining governance reforms:

The Plaridel Declaration on Media Governance, Media in Governance

1. Promote public journalism as a philosophy that looks at the public not merely as audience or market but as intended outcome by providing opportunities and venues for media education, training, and multi-sector dialogues to encourage greater and more meaningful citizen participation in governance.
2. Ensure a balance between press freedom and social responsibility; between profit and mission by raising the standards of media and encouraging business and media owner support for good journalism.

3. Develop, strengthen and sustain mechanisms for citizen feedback and to check press abuses and review, assess and recommend action/s regarding media self-regulatory bodies.
4. Rationalize use of airtime (radio and TV) with the help of the KBP, NTC and other organizations to encourage the airing of more substantive, meaningful stories.
5. Provide continuing training for media on values, ethics and responsibility to promote media transparency and accountability while actively supporting and sustaining media welfare and protection programs including but not limited to the establishment of legal assistance bureaus for community journalists.
6. Support, encourage and strengthen multi-sector advocacy for Access to Information, Freedom of Information, broadcast franchising legislation, and other laws that impact on media coverage and citizens' right to know.
7. Establish media (especially the community press) and multi-sector network for sharing, exchanging and accessing information/data especially on corruption and to link the network with research institutions
8. Strengthen and support media alliances especially at the local level through regular media summits and forums to address media and governance issues.
9. Encourage and support media initiatives that project lessons from partnerships between citizens and governments in addressing governance issues especially those that impact on the lives of the poor.
10. Develop, support and promote advocacy for community media strengthening and professionalization through multi-sector, multi-stakeholder efforts and programs.

Annexes

I. Papers

1. Welcome Remarks
Mr. Kyo Naka, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative
2. Governance Reforms from an LGU Point of View
Hon. Jesse M. Robredo, Mayor, Naga City
3. Media Governance, Media in Governance
Mr. Red Batario, Executive Director, Center for Community Journalism and Development
4. Media Self-Regulation through the KBP Standards Authority
Mr. Rey Hulog, Executive Director, Kapisanan ng mga Brodkasters ng Pilipinas
5. Revitalizing the Philippine Press Council
Mr. Jose L. Pavia, Executive Director, Philippine Press Institute
6. Monitoring Media in the 2004 Elections
Ms. Melinda Quintos de Jesus, Executive Director, Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility
7. Working for Journalists' Welfare
Ms. Inday Espina Varona, Chair, National Union of Journalists of the Philippines
8. Media and Transparency in the Judiciary
Mr. Ramon Tuazon, Vice-President, Asian Institute of Journalism and Communications
9. Reporting that Leads to Governance Reforms
Ms. Sheila Coronel, Executive Director, Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism
10. Governance Engagement through Public Journalism
Ms. Ma. Diosa Labiste, Editorial Consultant, The Visayas Examiner
Ms. Yasmin D. Arquiza, Publisher, Bandillo ng Palawan
11. Journalism in the Phenomenon of Migration
Mr. Jeremaiah Opiniano, Founding President, OFW Journalism Consortium
12. Reporting on Women and Gender Issues
Ms. Olive Tripon, Executive Director, Women's Feature Service
13. Communication Rights as Arena for Engagement
Mr. Alan Alegre, Executive Director, Foundation for Media Alternatives
14. The Media and the Courts: Indispensable Allies in Good Governance
Hon. Hilario G. Davide, Jr., Chief Justice, Supreme Court of the Philippines

II. Photos