REPORT ON THE PROCEEDINGS: MEDIA AND ELECTIONS

THE IMPACS 2001 ROUNDTABLE

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for IMPACS – INSTITUTE FOR MEDIA, POLICY AND CIVIL SOCIETY, VANCOUVER, B.C.

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A preliminary examination of the relationship between the media and Election Management Bodies and what can be done to enhance the media's role in elections in emerging democracies. With case studies, lessons learned and recommendations for providing Canadian expertise in developing media coverage of elections.

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MEDIA AND ELECTIONS
The IMPACS Roundtable Report

An election which goes well can be the turning point on any nation's road to democracy. But an election which goes badly can easily destroy the democratic gains and turn the nation back towards tyranny. In this modern age, one of the most critical elements of how an election goes is the media. In addition to being an indicator, the media is also a key actor capable of great influence. Without freedom of the media as a whole and healthy pluralism within the media, no election can be truly democratic.

The Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society (IMPACS) convened the 2001 Media and Elections Roundtable to consider the multi-faceted relationships between the media and elections in emerging democracies and to focus on what can be done to enhance the media's role in supporting democratic development. The Roundtable dialogue is part of a larger initiative by IMPACS to meet the growing need for resources and policy direction on media and elections and on media and peacebuilding.

This report summarizes the proceedings and highlights the findings of the Media and Elections Roundtable dialogue.

Introduction

The Media and Elections Roundtable brought together twenty leading individuals from around the world with a wealth of experience in the regulation and conduct of elections and in the practice of journalism relating to elections. The event was supported by the Peacebuilding and Human Security Division of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

The specific objectives of the Roundtable were:

1. To generate an expert peer discussion of the most essential problems facing both journalists and Election Management Bodies (EMBs) in the conduct of elections in emerging democracies;
2. To produce a document outlining advice and potential assistance to media and election facilitators in environments of democratic transition; and
3. To provide advice and assistance to the Canadian government in formulating policy and initiatives in this area.

The exploration of issues took place over two days in Vancouver, Canada on August 18 and 19, 2001 in the form of brief presentations, followed by discussions and proposals, smaller working group sessions, and informal conversation. The agenda was divided into three sessions. The first focused on the conduct of elections from the journalists' perspective, the second explored media issues from the viewpoint of election facilitators, and the third considered three case studies demonstrating real obstacles and initiatives in recent and forthcoming elections. An in-depth roundtable dialogue emerged out of each session. Participants received a series of guiding questions in advance of the Roundtable along with references to resources, including the elections operations handbook entitled ACE (Administration and Costs of Elections) Project by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

Three cross-cutting themes of major importance emerged from the discussions:

- regulating the media,
- training the media, and
- monitoring the media.

Each theme was elaborated in some detail by small working groups and reconsidered again by the full roundtable group. The working group findings and the Roundtable elaborations are summarized below.

The Canadian Context

David Viveash, Director of the Peacebuilding and Human Security Division within the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), expressed the increasing significance of peacebuilding initiatives as an instrument of Canadian foreign policy. Canadian peacebuilding initiatives are grouped into several areas of focus: conflict prevention, governance and accountability, protection of civilians, peace support operations, and public safety.

The Canadian government considers it in its national interest to support conflict prevention and management in emerging democracies and is working to define Canadian resources to enhance its role, most specifically in supporting democratic elections. A fundamental challenge is the mobilization of these resources, given the financial constraints on government. Alternatives, such as joint ventures among the Canadian media sector, journalism schools and the government, to support media-related initiatives of peacebuilding must be explored. Mr. Viveash encouraged participants to include this new paradigm, the heightened collaboration of the corporate, academic and civil society sectors to realize Canadian government peace-building initiatives, in their thinking at all times.

SESSION ONE:
JOURNALIST PERSPECTIVES ON MEDIA AND ELECTIONS

Canada: fully regulated. Technological change in the last ten years has made it much easier to report on elections, and to teach journalists how to use technology, said **Dr. Christopher Waddell** of Carleton University's School of Journalism. On a global scale, technology has also accelerated the pace of campaigning, which increases the emphasis on immediacy at the expense of issue exploration in the content of media reports.

Canada is fortunate to have extensive election rules in place, set by Parliament and administered by an independent, permanent election commission, which offers expertise and models for consideration elsewhere. Among both Canadian media and political parties, the commission is respected as non-partisan and independent, and adherence to its rules is well-established. The courts are equally respected as a final avenue of appeal on rulings by the commission.

Dr. Waddell added, however, that technology, most specifically the Internet, is producing unprecedented challenges to existing election regulations in Canada, as elsewhere. For example, the media black-out banning election reporting until all regions have voted is no longer enforceable, because of uncontrollable Internet access everywhere at once. While institutions such as the state-owned-but-independent CBC radio and television networks have monitored their own broadcasts in Canada to ward off accusations of imbalance or bias, the technology-driven pace of campaigning has

made qualitative independent monitoring increasingly difficult.

Three major shortcomings of Canadian election reporting are probably applicable everywhere, concluded Dr. Waddell:

- the lack of journalists' training specifically in election coverage;
- the lack of journalists' competency in handling public opinion polls during elections; and
- "pack journalism" which produces superficial coverage at the expense of independent and inquiring reporting.

Particularly for emerging democracies, the three essentials for responsible media coverage of elections are:

1. well-established rules for the conduct of the media and the election commissions,
2. a process of arbitration and enforcement of regulations governing the media; and
3. sufficient technology in place.

Abuse of regulation: Regulating the media inevitably challenges civil liberties, but for democratic elections it seems necessary. Canada does it successfully, while in the US, an aversion to media regulation contributed to the confusion in the results of the recent national election, observed **Bob Norris**, an election-media facilitator with the

Washington-based National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI).

But in emerging democracies, the greatest media challenge often lies beyond rights and competency and emerges in the fact that there is simply no tradition of the media as independent nor of journalists as seekers of the truth. A diversity of media outlets is one partial response to this. Also essential is supportive legislation and regulation, such as ensuring reporters' access to information.

Mr. Norris noted that when it comes to media regulation there should be variations in the degree of regulation to reflect different media forms. For example, print media, which is most accessible to alternative voices and publishers for the lowest cost, should be the least regulated. Broadcasting, however, because of its reach and also because it represents a use of a public resource, the airwaves, requires greater regulation.

Media monitoring is misused, said Mr. Norris, when it is relied upon to dictate what is an appropriate amount of coverage. But monitoring can provide snapshots of differences which may reveal disparities and unfairness. Independent monitoring also can help discipline the media, by fostering self-examination and by bringing the media to account for the disparities.

Degrees of regulation: South-East Asia provides a spectrum of media independence and democratic enhancement, ranging from the freest to the most shackled. The region defies any single description, or prescription, said **Jose Ma Carlos**, Development Director of the Asian Media Information and Communications Centre (AMIC) in Singapore. Thailand and the Philippines may be criticized for their excesses of media freedom, while the media in Myanmar and Vietnam are mere extensions of the government.

However, there are several concerns and developments which have wide applicability. There is a rapid emergence of media advocacy groups wherever tolerated. These groups are educating the public to issues of media performance and corruption during elections. New technologies, such as cell phones and pagers with text messaging, have become major elements in some states' election campaigning and present new regulatory challenges. Media corruption has become pervasive; up to thirty per cent of some campaigns' spending is devoted to media corruption. Media practitioners who launch successfully into politics is a growing phenomenon which challenges the media's image as a disinterested independent actor. Private media owners increasingly exercise their influence and bias through the commercial side of their mediums, offering advertisements, marketing assistance and other favours to preferred candidates.

A self-sustaining media economy is essential to democratic elections. A process of "controlled liberalization" is occurring at a pace largely determined by popular pressure and international influence. Training and enhanced professionalism, along with access to information, and understanding the implications of new media, are the constant priorities of progressive media managers in the region.

DISCUSSION

Participants ranged widely in their initial contributions and made a number of general points.

- It was repeatedly noted that election regulations concerning media must reflect local conditions and conventions. An activity, such as banning exit polls, is considered common practice in some countries and undemocratic in others. Similarly, media regulations must be structured to reflect different media and their different reach and impacts, such as print media versus radio. One size does not fit all. There is no single template for media regulation in elections.

- A related consideration is to recognize the scale of the challenge, such as regulating media coverage of an election in a country of 650 million voters of whom forty per cent are illiterate, forty per cent have no access to media and only learn of issues through candidates and parties, and the voting takes place over thirty days. Local, indigenous media become exceptionally important in such an environment and deserve special attention from EMBs.

- Full-scale media regulation may be simply too onerous for any emerging democracy to fully incorporate in a country's first democratic election. A phased approach may be necessary, solidifying the gains and building the media professionalism and the infra-structure supportive of free media between elections. It was observed that elections represent an excellent oppor-tunity to instil important democratic concepts such as transparency and information access and to position such concepts for extension beyond the election into regular state behaviour.

- Regulating state media alone in an election does not necessarily elevate private media performance towards balanced reporting. The private and public media must both be considered.

- Since, to have any effect, media moni-toring must avoid any taint of partisan-ship. Therefore the training of those involved in the monitoring process is critical.

- Independent and balanced reporting flourishes with the enhancement of the socio-economic status of journalists, because it removes the allure of bribes and corruption. Media development related to elections should be aware of this challenge.

SESSION TWO:
ELECTIONS AND MEDIA
FROM THE EMB PERSPECTIVE

Clear rules: An election is the single biggest logistical event in peacetime and in emerging democracies it occurs in a highly charged environment in which everyone is looking for something to be done wrong, said **Therese Laanela,** Senior Programme Officer with the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) and an experienced election organizer. The media's ill-informed pounce on every inaccuracy as fraud can be very damaging. The media behaves best when the election conduct rules are clear, justifiable, known, preferably consensual and there are ways to ensure compliance.

Credibility: Election Management Bodies (EMBs) must be clear with the media about their activities. They must also outline transparent and defensible guidelines for access of the media to the EMB events and briefings. The cornerstones of EMB-media relationships are understanding, transparency, and trust and confidence, agreed **Ron Gould,** Assistant Chief Electoral Officer, International Services, at Elections Canada, and Senior Executive with International

IDEA. The relationship should be symbiotic. The public *and* the media must understand the operations and principles of the EMB. Transparency allows the media to fulfill its role of watchdog by having access to all procedures of the EMB. And trust matters most. Without the trust of the media, an EMB's work and the credibility of the vote is imperiled. Voters and the media must be confident that the vote is secret and secure.

Confronting reality: In Southern Africa the gaps between professed media freedom and election media regulation, versus reality, are vast, said **Dr. David Pottie** of the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA). Only a minority of countries have an independent EMB to regulate the media; most media are not economically sustainable, which makes them dependent upon government advertising and prone to political bias. The digital divide is awesome: only four per cent of the African population is internet-connected. Two types of change are needed in an emerging democracy's media: self-transformation of state media and legislated change of independent media.

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Session Three:
Case Studies

On the second day, roundtable participants heard from three practitioners who presented graphic descriptions of recent or ongoing election media initiatives in which they have been involved. Participants were canvassed for responses and contributions to the particular challenging dimensions of each case.

GUYANA
Shauna Sylvester and Bob Norris (substituting for David deCaires)

In the opinion of some analysts Guyana is so severely divided it resembles Rwanda two years before the genocide, said Ms. Sylvester, who is Executive Director of the Institute for Media, Policy, and Civil Society (IMPACS), and who recently supported media reconciliation efforts in Guyana. Once racially homogeneous, political parties are now distinguished exclusively along racial lines between Afro and Indo Guyanese. More recently, the media began to take racial sides. The one state-controlled newspaper adheres closely to the views of the ruling party, there is one independent and higher-quality newspaper, *Stabroek News,* and numerous partisan publications and broadcasters. Professional training is largely lacking and only a few older journalists are well-trained. Gender issues are also evident in the profession and in the news content, although women may be a mobilizing force for change. In addition to state radio, there is a plethora of unlicensed and unregulated independent private television outlets that are heavily reliant on pirated foreign broadcasts and partisan talk-show formats.

IMPACS supported local media in establishing a voluntary media code of conduct and guidelines for election coverage. There was a shortage of models for the code. A code was drafted and consensually agreed upon by a roundtable of a majority of the indigenous media, with two respected Caribbean-region journalists appointed as monitors. Separately, the Guyana EMB, through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched its own qualitative monitoring exercise, operated by foreign advisors, using local personnel from the university.

Although the media code monitors issued three reports indicating widespread media imbalance and violations, and the EMB monitors issued several reports naming major violators, these initiatives produced no marked change in the media behaviour compared to the previous election. Several broadcasters engaged in heavily biased reporting and were instrumental in raising the level of rioting and violence following the election. In neither the media's nor the EMB's efforts were there any provisions for mechanisms to enforce adherence to the code through punitive measures. Peer pressure within the media proved ineffective.

While the process of drafting the code had brought antagonistic media practitioners together for the first time in years, and prompted calls for media regulation, the longer term value of the initiative is unclear.

The key question is how to address contraventions of the code of conduct in the absence of effective sanctions.

CAMBODIA
Wayne Sharpe

The 1993 United Nations (UN)-enforced elections and media code gave birth to a free press in Cambodia. The UN's departure left no indigenous culture nor infrastructure for the promotion of responsible media and a rabid, reckless and highly partisan press developed which prompted assassinations of journalists, said Mr. Sharpe, who is director of IMPACS' Journalists' Training Project in Cambodia.

Monitoring of the 1998 national elections revealed gross imbalances of media coverage favouring the government party and confirmed an unfair and undemocratic election. The February 2002 commune elections in 1,600 districts, the first in 20 years, represent an opportunity to use media positively for voter education and registration, for public awareness of underlying issues, and for ensuring peaceful voting. Commune leaders currently wield extensive influence over voters through bribes and inducements, and resist any reduction of their power. The national EMB is far behind in voter education and registration. The challenges to the media playing a positive role are numerous.

The challenge in this environment of significantly biased media is to identify structures and processes possible in newsrooms to foster objectivity and reduce partisanship and irresponsible reporting. A long-term goal is media adherence to an election charter or code. A strategy is needed to reach and influence the decision-makers within the media managements to adopt a less partisan tone. An immediate challenge is how to respond to and influence election campaigning which is overwhelmingly devoted to personalities and character assassination.

MEXICO
Eréndira Cruzvillegas

In 2000, an alliance of civil society organizations played a key role in ending 69 years of effectively one-party rule in Mexican politics by generating considerable media scrutiny of the election campaign which influenced the outcomes, said Erendira Cruzvillegas, Executive Director of the National Centre for Social Communication (CENCOS). Although the EMB of Mexico acts independently, and substantially funds both parties and media for campaign coverage, the election culture was still dominated by previous conditions of corruption and persuasion. An extensive media monitoring system was launched several months before the election, and included monthly reports on media in 575 electoral districts. Small media and rural media were included wherever possible. In addition, the assessments were part of a voter education programme aimed at media managers.

The alliance of civil society organizations, rather than the EMB, set the standard for more balanced reporting, and achieved some compliance through its tactics of exposure and its reach to voters through the parallel voter education campaign.

In addition to conventional quantitative monitoring (measuring volumes of coverage), the alliance provided qualitative analysis of the tone and intent of media reports and also commented on media outlets which censored their own reporters' reports of public events. This also created an alternative way for reports to become public. The issue of media managers overtly stifling their staff's attempts at balanced reporting is a major problem in Mexico. The alliance succeeded in convincing the media that the monitors represented the most balanced assessment of the campaign available in the country, which was accessible to voters, and led to some changes in media reporting.

FINDINGS

From a discussion of these presentations and cases studies, three critical areas of media attention in enhancing democratic elections were identified:

- **regulations,**
- **media development, and**
- **monitoring.**

Through a series of discussions and small group examinations, participants identified the following issues and recommendations:

1. REGULATIONS

A structure of regulatory instruments relating to elections and media must exist as a framework for any democratic election. Paramount is the **constitution** and other enshrined laws guaranteeing fundamental freedoms in a democracy, such as universal suffrage, secrecy of the vote and recognition of an independent EMB to conduct elections.

This recognition should be spelled out in **legislation** establishing the process of elections and empowering the EMB. Other legislation applicable to media conduct in elections includes mechanisms of media licensing such as broadcasting commissions, and also in laws defining libel, discrimination and hate-mongering. Both the constitution and the legislation can reflect international standards and principles of democracy and regulatory structures operating in most established democracies.
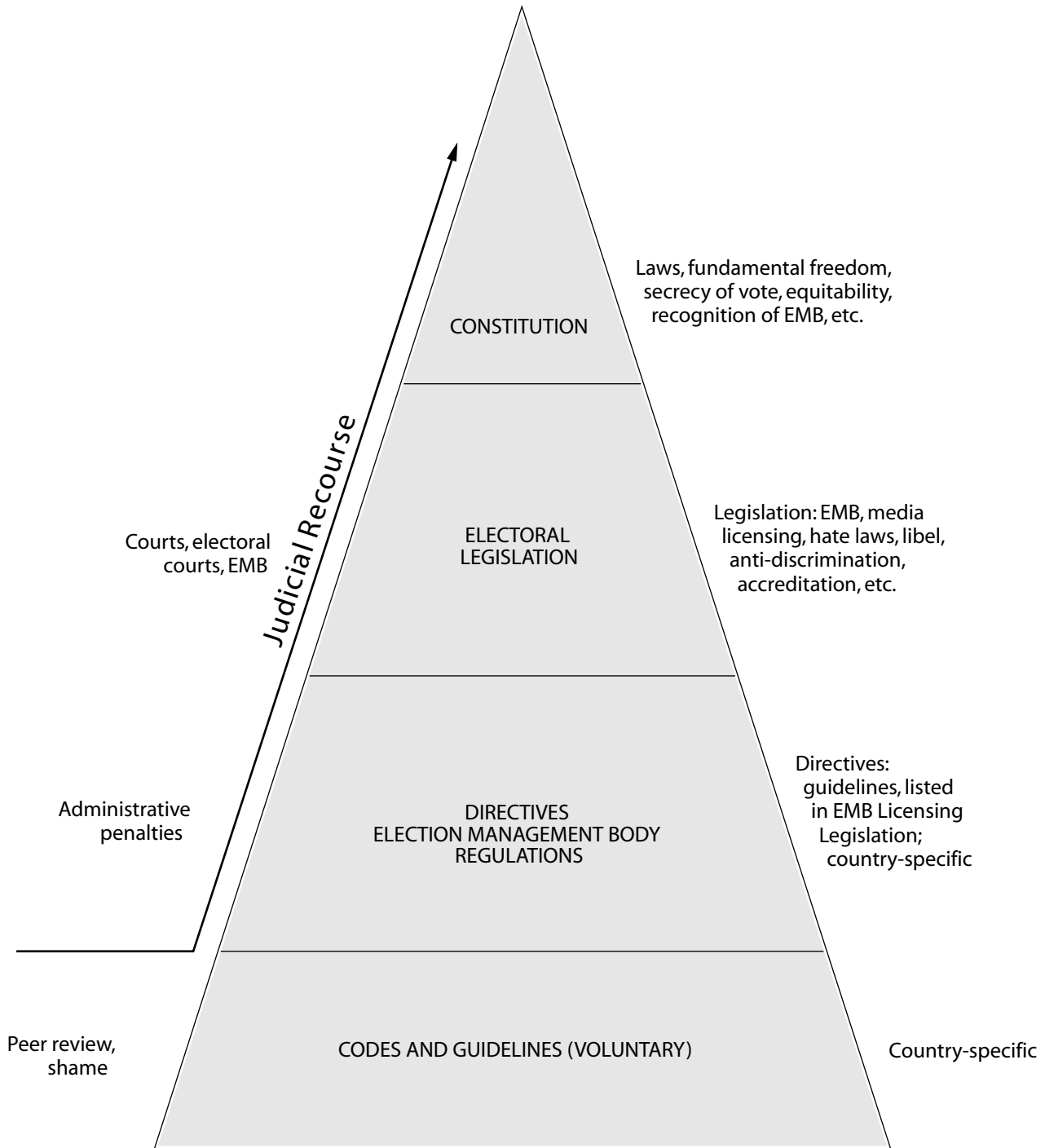
Beneath the legislative authority, the EMB has its own set of specific directives to parties, candidates and media in elections, described as **regulations and directives**. These can include particular reflections of local culture and tradition and reflect the stage of democratic evolution of the country.

Beneath that are the media's **codes** of professionalism and conduct, voluntary guidelines, any collective self-interest practices such as union and association rules, and particular local conventions. These codes are distinct from the EMB's directives, and often involve voluntary compliance only. In other cases the most effective inducements may be peer review, professional condemnation and exclusion from professional or other association. However, reflecting a country's particular legislative arrangements, compliance with conduct codes may be assigned to a regulatory body or the EMB and include penalties such as fines or legal action.

However, for violations of EMB regulations, legislation and constitutional values, there can be both EMB-directed and administered penalties such as reduced access to EMB services, and more severe penalties ordered by courts. Similarly, allegations of violation of these three levels of regulation should include recourse to judicial review of any penalties imposed.

This structure of media-related election regulation can be described in the following form:

Chart to Media/Elections Regulations:

Pyramid diagram showing levels of media/elections regulations:

- **CONSTITUTION** — Laws, fundamental freedom, secrecy of vote, equitability, recognition of EMB, etc. (Courts, electoral courts, EMB)
- **ELECTORAL LEGISLATION** — Legislation: EMB, media licensing, hate laws, libel, anti-discrimination, accreditation, etc. (Courts, electoral courts, EMB)
- **DIRECTIVES ELECTION MANAGEMENT BODY REGULATIONS** — Directives: guidelines, listed in EMB Licensing Legislation; country-specific (Administrative penalties)
- **CODES AND GUIDELINES (VOLUNTARY)** — Country-specific (Peer review, shame)

Judicial Recourse (arrow up the left side)

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Items which fall within this structure of media regulation include:

- Libel laws
- Hate speech
- Access to airwaves
- Print media regulations
- Party/candidate advertising regulations, defining both content and volume
- Allocation of public funds for candidates, parties, campaigning
- Public disclosure of advertising funders
- Public disclosure of political contributions
- Regulation of third party advertising
- Foreign media access and funding
- Party debates
- Voter education
- Accreditation of journalists
- Polls, both content and reporting of
- Access to registration, arbitration proceedings, and vote-counting
- Internet regulations
- Editorial content versus opinion and comment versus partisan material

(A more detailed list of issues requiring regulatory consideration is found in the Media and Elections Index of the Administration and Cost of Elections Project (ACE) at www.aceproject.org/main.)

2. MEDIA DEVELOPMENT OR TRAINING

Media development or training related to elections can be advanced in three stages:

1. Informational briefings provided by EMBs and other designated bodies on the operation of the election and on media responsibilities and strictures.
2. Pre-election and in-campaign initiatives for professional training and upgrading of journalists through courses, online resources, and mentoring by experienced international professionals.
3. Permanent training modules to introduce election coverage issues within existing journalism education programs at universities and colleges.

Professional training content should include the domestic EMB regulations and procedures, the electoral process from voter registration to the vote count, techniques and technology of election coverage, in-campaign coverage, constitutional and legal issues, media ethics, and international standards.

Training should be aimed at all levels of journalism – reporters, editors, managers and other editorial decision-makers. EMB officers responsible for liaising with the media should also be exposed to some of this training.

3. MONITORING

Monitoring, as a minimum, seeks to determine whether political parties and candidates in an election campaign receive open access to the news media. It seeks to determine whether the coverage is fair in accordance with domestic and international standards and is providing voters sufficient information to make an informed decision. Monitoring seeks to increase the media's accountability to the public.

The monitoring methodology must be transparent and accessible to both the media and to politicians. The monitoring organization must be respected as non-partisan. Non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, or media associations are appropriate as long as their purpose is to increase the media's accountability to the public for the sake of ensuring free and fair journalism.

Monitoring should cover all significant media, recognizing its reach and impact, and apply different methodology to reflect different types of media. Local-regional media should not be ignored. Also, unconventional media such as poster campaigns or the Internet must be considered. To ignore these, especially where their impact is significant, is to risk losing credibility.

Monitoring for quantitative analysis alone is insufficient. Measuring the amount of a broadcaster or publisher's coverage of one party, such as citing the column inches of coverage, gives no indication of the tone and content which could be either entirely supportive or negative. The message is as important as the volume of it. Qualitative monitoring is required wherever possible.

Smaller-scale monitoring initiatives, such as state or regional elections, can offer a good training ground and test bed for national-scale elections. Universities and respected media associations are good starting points for assembling a monitoring initiative.

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Further Discussion

A number of important amplifications of the findings and reflections were arrived at, including:

1. REGULATION

- Most Roundtable participants felt the capacity to enforce media compliance with election regulations is a high priority for EMBs. Voluntary codes of media conduct are most often ineffective in emerging democracies and raise questionable risks to those seeking adherence to the codes. Unsanctioned flouting of these codes engenders disrespect for the rest of the election process and puts participating media at a disadvantage.

- However, some participants noted and there is evidence available elsewhere that even the introduction of a voluntary code of media conduct in a transitional state or an emerging democracy represents an opportunity for advancing media education and professionalism, instilling collective media consciousness and responsibility through peer pressure, and serves as a benchmark. The particular conditions of the election may be sufficient for the code to have significant effect on media conduct, even in the absence of a domestic hierarchy of regulation, if reinforced by an international agency or peacekeeping force. One example can be found with the August 2001

voluntary code of East Timor journalists, at www.easttimorelections.org/news.

- The effective application of EMB influence over media behaviour requires that the EMBs be seen to be independent and fair. The regulatory authority they exercise to support them in making determinations about media conduct should include the specific enforcement mechanisms. There should be no ad-hoc rules or penalties. The EMB must spell out clearly the areas of activity which it will regulate and ensure that any not included on its list are covered by other authorities.

- A regulatory structure separate from the EMB such as licensing, and standards of law such as libel which can be used by the EMB or others to support any media code adhesion appears to be essential. In Guyana, early expectations of legislative imposition of broadcast and licensing standards to support the EMB never materialized and the monitoring process was forced to rely on peer pressure as a mechanism of enforce-ment. This however failed to have effect, particularly when the most flagrant offenders abandoned their commitment to publish the monitors' reports on their behaviour, as originally promised by all participants in the Guyana Roundtable.

- Sanctions imposed by an EMB against individual reporters are misdirected

because they do not address media decision-makers, media ownership and pressure points such as advertisers. Enforcement should be directed at the media outlets, not at individual journalists.

2. MEDIA DEVELOPMENT OR TRAINING

- EMBs should not directly engage in training media in methods of election coverage, although they should strongly encourage others to train. EMBs should be information providers. However, a transparent and accessible EMB, which includes educating the media on how the EMB operates, can go a long way to fostering media awareness of the difference between mistakes and fraud in the conduct of the campaign, thus reducing volatility before and after the voting.
- EMBs should put strong emphasis on arms-length enhancement of media professional development at the earliest opportunity. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) experienced in media, communications and elections issues represent major initial training resources and should be invited by EMBs to provide training. EMBs can, however, encourage sustainability of these training initiatives by encouraging their integration into existing learning institutions and the training of indigenous NGOs and trainers, and by determining repositories for training materials to be circulated locally.
- Media development should take account of at least three issues: 1) capacity building and sustainability, 2) motivation, and 3) technology. Capacity building or sustainability, particularly when media development is first instituted by outside organizations, means developing local trainers and indigenous ability to maintain the

programs beyond the election. Mentorship programs, both in-country and in exchanges, and continuous institutional linkages, are one way of achieving this.
- Motivation is an overlooked but important aspect of professional development. Good journalistic practices need recognition and peer reward, which can instill pride in competency. Bringing journalists together in emerging democracies into associations, with linkage to international associations and organizations, can also transmit motivating values and experiences. It was noted that professional development raises the self-esteem and professionalism of journalists who are abjectly ill-paid and vulnerable to corruption. As one roundtable participant put it, in the absence of all else, self-esteem and professionalism may suffice.
- Media training and monitoring on a hit-and-run basis, aimed at a single election event as was done under the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) auspices in the former Yugoslavia with no plan for sustainability and little indigenous involvement in the training process, risks reversing further progress towards democratization. The international peace force imposed media rules governing regular and election-related broadcasting and publishing, and in cases of extreme non-compliance forcibly removed broadcast facilities or demolished them. While the rules were clear, there was no willing compliance. The complementary funding of a wide diversity of indigenous media outlets, while highly expensive, multiplied the partisan voices because of the poor quality of the journalism which resulted from inadequate training programs. In addition the initiative has created an artificial economic environment for

most of the new media outlets with little hope of sustainability when international subsidization declines.

• Sustainability is critical. In Cambodia, the UN implemented a highly successful voter-education media-based campaign around the first democratic elections, but withdrew immediately afterwards and most of the media competency collapsed for lack of indigenous media professionalism and supportive infrastructures.

• Professional training must be accompanied by initiatives to develop a media-supportive infrastructure – the courts, legislatures and security institutions – to protect journalists who are practicing good journalism. Professional standards of journalistic fairness and objectivity during an election in an otherwise inhospitable political environment can be easily trampled or abused. This frustrates journalists and their efforts, and puts their personal safety at risk. At the very least, elections should be used to educate the political and governance structures to the role and practices of an independent media.

3. MONITORING

Roundtable participants focused strongly on the question of whether media monitoring, by independent agents or by an EMB, can be of value if the monitoring result is unconnected to any codes of conduct backed by an effective avenue of enforcement. The following conclusions emerged:

• Media monitoring in a country where the media is visibly unfair and not free can still have "leverage" value. Monitoring, if allowed to safely operate and be reported, can be a voter education tool. It also can be a politician education tool. Monitoring provides a benchmark. It measures journalistic professionalism and training accomplishments. It can generate peer pressure within the media. It can encourage an evolution of performance by describing bias and applauding those doing well. It can bring international scrutiny which can become third party influence on powerful elites within the country and among internationally-connected businesses.

• Monitoring, especially when conducted by credible outside monitors, can serve as a preliminary step to introduce greater awareness of higher standards of balanced journalism in a country lacking any such tradition. In Cambodia, for example, there is no tradition of outside professional monitoring. Only local NGOs have previously monitored and at the risk of partisanship accusations. Professional monitoring could be of some influence on media behaviour in the forthcoming elections, although the logistical challenge of monitoring communal elections is daunting.

• There is no consensus on whether or not media monitoring should be conducted by EMBs themselves. Some do, others do not. Most of those which do monitoring place their emphasis on quantitative aspects for the purpose of ensuring the media adhere to equal access doctrines. Others, such as the EMB in Mexico, fund independent monitors which foster media responsibility by pointing out failures and seek to foster voter education. In some jurisdictions, the EMBs attempt qualitative monitoring, which includes analysis of the tone and direction of individual reports as part of assessing the media's performance. However, the integrity of the EMB when it comes to using these findings to punish or correct media performance has rarely been tested. Monitoring by an EMB to dictate what is appropriate coverage is not a preferred option.

Recommendations

1. Initiatives and programs separately dedicated to professional development of media and to election training for EMBs, in emerging democracies, need to have greater awareness of each other and of the inter-relationship of media and elections, and should establish complementary programs.

2. Media training programs in emerging democracies should specifically place a priority on developing journalists' capabilities in election coverage and in an understanding of local and international standards of elections, and in the application of new technology. EMBs should foster but not conduct these programs.

3. EMBs should seek out and make greater use of media technologies and new media capabilities to produce better programming on elections for voter education, during campaigns and the vote. EMBs also need exposure and access to new technology and techniques designed not only to serve voters but for ease of media reporting, such as displaying vote results quickly and appropriately. The period between vote counting and the release of the results can be one of great social instability and needs to be as short and as transparent as possible.

4. Democracies, agencies and NGOs with technology and techniques to support capacity-building, motivation and creative programming should make themselves more available to emerging democracies. Websites such as IDEA's ACE (Administration and Costs of Elections) Project need to be available in as many languages as possible.

5. Media monitoring under safe, credible conditions deserves encouragement for its several values and should be further developed and supported by the international community. The effectiveness of media monitoring depends as much upon the competency of the work as the particular organization which conducts the monitoring. Appropriate techniques of measurement and collation and dissemination of results under varying conditions of emerging democracy should be made more available, through professional organizations, educational institutions and international agencies.

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Canadian Considerations

It was noted that Canadian standards of election conduct, voter expectations and media performance are very high and Elections Canada has provided election operations expertise internationally. But media-related expertise which is highly developed in Canada within election agencies, and election experience within the media, has not been widely offered. Canadian resources in the field of media and elections are not catalogued, organized, or funded for international access. It was noted that a large number of Canadians have been employed by international NGOs and agencies for their skills in media-related work, but Canada neither organizes nor promotes such skills as its uniquely Canadian contribution to peace-building.

There is little recognition of this major Canadian resource as an element of Canadian foreign policy and international aid. There is also no role played by Canadian media industries in acknowledging and supporting this exceptionally-qualified Canadian expertise and in encouraging foundations to make it an area of focus and support. There is also little evidence that Canadian journalism schools and other academic centres have recognized this Canadian attribute and potential or are programming to advance Canadian knowledge and skills in the field.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANADA

1. The government and the NGO-civil society sector should work together to establish Canadian expertise in media and elections in an accessible form for emerging democracies. The corporate sector should be encouraged to see its obligations and opportunities for contributing to democratization and media freedom.

2. This accumulated expertise should represent an important niche in international affairs for Canada. The Canadian government should dedicate a focus on this opportunity within its foreign policy initiatives.

3. A database of experienced practitioners and a database of existing materials, including reports of previous Canadian election monitoring and election media-training initiatives, should be assembled.

4. A compendium of international codes of media conduct in elections and of best practices should be established.

5. Canadians with experience in election management should be recruited to develop training modules for international applicability.

6. Canadians serving abroad should be made aware of Canadian competency and expertise in the field of media and elections.

7. A capacity to dispatch Canadians to locations where media-election skills and resources are required should be developed. Creation and administration of a roster of qualified Canadian media advisors should be discussed by DFAIT and the Canadian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights (CANADEM).

8. The appropriate departments and agencies of the federal government, academic institutions and other training facilities, the Canadian media industry, NGOs and other appropriate interests should collectively address how to best address this opportunity for Canada and for international peacebuilding.

Appendix 1

IMPACS Media and Elections Roundtable

August 17 to 19, 2001

Participant Biographies

Jose Maria G. Carlos is the senior programme specialist and Head of Seminars and Institutional Development Programme of the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC), a Singapore-based NGO involved in research, training, publication and events management related to media and communication in Asia-Pacific. Mr. Carlos is a graduate of Communication Arts from the University of Santo Tomas, Manila, with a Masters' degree in Management from the Asian Institute of Management, Philippines. amicline@singnet.com.sg

Maria Eréndira Cruzvillegas Fuentes has worked in senior posts as both an Electoral Officer in Mexico City and as a journalist. She has extensive experience working as an academic, senior researcher, citizen organizer, urban planner, and video-maker. Ms. Cruzvillegas holds a Masters degree in Communications from the National Independent University of Mexico. She is a founding member of the Human Rights Committee and the author of several publications on democracy, ecumenical studies, housing, and development. Currently Ms. Fuentes is the Chief Electoral Officer for District 30 of Mexico City. cencos@prodigy.net.mx

John W. Foster is currently the Principal Researcher – Civil Society with the North-South Institute in Ottawa. Previously he was the Ariel F. Sallows Professor of Human Rights, College of Law, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK, Canada (1997-99), and a visiting scholar, Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego (1993, 1997). Dr. Foster holds a Doctorate in History from the University of Toronto. He was an NGO international visitor (observer), in cooperation with the Alianza Civica, in the Mexican federal elections of 1994, 1997 and a pre-electoral mission in 2000. He was also an NGO observer of the civic plebiscite in the Distrito Federal in 1992. Dr. Foster was also a candidate in the Canadian federal elections of 1979 and 1980 in the Toronto-Spadina constituency. jfoster@nsi-ins.ca

Marc Gage is currently an international freelance journalist and communications consultant. In this capacity he has provided broadcast journalism training in emerging democracies, and has taught television journalism, writing skills and production values in news gathering. Mr. Gage has over twenty years of journalism experience. In the past he has worked in various senior capacities for several Canadian media outlets including the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and CTV National News. cmarcgage@aol.com

Ron Gould has worked for Elections Canada for the last 15 years. Since 1984, when he was a member of the Organization of American States (OAS) and Canadian monitoring missions in El Salvador, he has participated in election assistance to over thirty countries, including Eastern Slavonia, Bosnia, Haiti, Mozambique, Cambodia, and Algeria. He is the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer for Elections Canada. gouchiholdings@hotmail.com

Ross Howard is a Vancouver writer and documentary film producer and concurrently Project Director for the Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society in the development of an Operational Framework for Media and Peace-building, to be published in 2002. Mr. Howard has worked as Assignment Editor for Vancouver Television News (VTV) and National

Correspondent for *The Globe and Mail* newspaper. He has won awards for his political, environmental and investigative reporting and for his documentary film *Against The Current*. ross_howard@telus.net

Hal Jones was a professional journalist for nearly forty years, and has worked in over seventy countries on five continents. He was a correspondent for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in London, Moscow, Washington and Toronto. Amongst other international events, he covered the early stages of the break-up of Yugoslavia and the Serb-Croat conflict. Mr. Jones now lives in Ontario, Canada and works as a private communications consultant. haljones@sympatico.ca

Kumar Ketkar is the Editor of the *Maharashtra Times*, Mumbai. Currently on sabbatical he is a visiting professor at the Fairleigh Dickinson University, New Jersey, USA and University of Georgia, Atlanta, teaching International Affairs and Changing World Order. He has over thirty years experience as a special correspondent, resident editor and political editor. Mr. Ketkar has covered elections in the United Kingdom, United States and Italy, witnessed the democratization process in the Soviet Union and East Germany, and attended Hong Kong's re-assimilation with China. Mr. Ketkar has received the highest national award in India for journalism – Padmashree, and the Giants International Award for Excellence in Journalism. ketkarkumar@hotmail.com

Theresa Laanela is the Senior Programme Officer, The Normative Division of IDEA. Prior to joining IDEA in June 1995, Ms. Laanela worked in Cambodia as a District Electoral Supervisor for the UN sponsored first multi-party election. Her focus then shifted to the first multi-party elections in Mozambique. She worked for the Provincial Electoral Commission in Nampula, under a UNDP project of technical assistance with special responsibility for voter education and air operations. Ms. Laanela holds a Masters degree in Oriental Languages from the University of Stockholm. t.laanela@idea.int

Bob Norris is President and founder of Commonwealth Consulting, Inc., a Washington, D.C.-based political consulting firm serving Democratic candidates in the United States. He is also a frequent consultant and advisor to the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and for other organizations working to promote democracy around the world. He has helped establish media monitoring projects in Guyana, Montenegro, Uganda, and Slovakia. He is currently working with NDI to produce "How to Monitor the Media in Transition Elections: A Step-by-Step Handbook." commwlth@ix.netcom.com

David Pottie holds a PhD in Political Science from York University, Canada. He has lectured in politics at York University, University of Natal, Rhodes University and University of the Witwatersrand. He has published on South African and southern African politics and government. Dr. Pottie is the head of research at the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa, a non-governmental organisation based in Johannesburg, South Africa. Dr. Pottie has observed elections in Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Belgium, Guyana and South Africa. dpottie@eisa.org.za

Vicki Robinson has worked for many years across British Columbia, Canada and internationally in the fields of politics, the non-governmental sector and civil society, and the interplay amongst these areas. Ms. Robinson has worked extensively in Bosnia, designing and implementing training that empowered citizens to take an active role in their first democratic elections, establishing and administering the International Media Center, training female politicians and activists in the areas of media relations and communications, and working to create a Voter Education and Awareness campaign. vrobinson@hotmail.com

Wayne Sharpe is a Canadian journalist and media consultant. Since 1999 he has been Director of the IMPACS Cambodia Journalists' Training Project, a CIDA-funded project that promotes good journalism and free media in Cambodia. From 1995 to 1999 he was Director of the

International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX), a network of fifty freedom of expression organizations worldwide. Mr. Sharpe is a regular contributor to a diverse assortment of publications, including the *Apple Daily* of Hong Kong, *The Independent* of Ghana, and *Pakistan Press International*. wtsharpe@sympatico.ca

Shauna Sylvester is the founding Executive Director of IMPACS. Since 1996, she has worked on a range of media and peacebuilding initiatives including: setting up and supervising a journalists' training project in Cambodia, supporting a confidence building initiative for senior editors of the indigenous press in South Asia, supporting a media and elections project in Guyana, overseeing a journalists' training program for the International Criminal Court, and working with donors to develop an international policy and training centre on media and peacebuilding. shaunas@impacs.org

David Viveash is Director of the Peacebuilding and Human Security Division of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT). Mr. Viveash is responsible for policy and programme development with respect to Canada's human security agenda. Immediately prior to taking up his current assignment, Mr. Viveash was Deputy Director in the Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament Division. He has also worked as Political Counsellor at the Canadian Embassy in Tel Aviv, Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, and Deputy Director of the Middle East Relations Division. Mr. Viveash holds an Honours Bachelor in Economics from the University of Windsor. david.viveash@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

Christopher Waddell is an Associate Professor at the School of Journalism and Communications and the first holder of the Carty Chair at Carleton University in Ottawa. Until July, 2001, Dr. Waddell was Parliamentary Bureau Chief for CBC Television News and was responsible for all coverage of federal politics and the federal government for CBC television and its news channel Newsworld. He has been in that position since the end of 1993 and was also the producer in charge of CBC's federal election campaign coverage in 1993, 1997 and 2001. He has won five Gemini awards for best special event coverage in Canadian television. Previously Dr. Waddell was a reporter at the *Globe and* in Toronto. Dr. Waddell holds a Doctorate in Canadian History from York University in Toronto. christopher_waddell@sympatico.ca

Stephen Ward is an Associate Professor at The Graduate School of Journalism at the University of British Columbia, with over fifteen years of journalism experience as foreign reporter, editor and newsroom manager. Dr. Ward was The Canadian Press (CP) Bureau Chief in Vancouver from 1995 to 1998 and was CP's only staff reporter in Europe from 1990 to 1994. Dr. Ward has a Doctorate in Philosophy from the University of Waterloo and was a research fellow at the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University prior to joining The School of Journalism. Dr. Ward has published articles and reviews on journalism ethics in the *Journal of Mass Media Ethics, The Harvard International Journal of Press and Politics* and other publications. He is currently writing a book on journalism ethics. sjward@interchange.ubc.ca

Appendix 2

Additional Resources

The Institute for War and Peace Reporting, www.iwpr.net for reports on monitoring, media conditions and election coverage.

"Media and Elections:" Media Division, Directorate of Human Rights, Council of Europe, www.humanrights.coe.int/media

Annual reports, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; UNHCR, www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home

Monitoring Media Fairness in Election Campaigns, by Patrick Merloe, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, www.ndi.org

United Nations Development Programme, www.undp.org

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems, www.ifes.org

EIM reports on monitoring, European Institute for the Media, Oneworld.net, www.OneWorld.net, see also the European Institute for the Media's website, www.eim.org

The Communications Initiative, www.comminit.com

International Journalists Network, New York, www.ijnet.org

Reporting, monitoring, regulations guidelines, Sample Materials Index, Media and Elections Index, Administration and Cost of Elections Project, www.aceproject.org

Reporting Elections in Southern Africa: A Handboook, by Chirmabo and McCullum, www.sardc.net

Committee to Protect Journalists, www.cpj.org

Commonwealth Secretariat, www.thecommonwealth.org

Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe, mmpz.icon.co.zw