

# **Abuja Declaration: Launch of the Federation of African Journalists**

Adopted at the African Journalists Congress:  
Building a Strong and United Voice for African Journalists

12-14 November 2007, Abuja, Nigeria

We, the leaders of the African journalists trade unions and associations gathering at the African Journalists Congress in Abuja Nigeria, 12-14 November 2007,

*Considering* the resolution of the African journalists' unions and associations at the regional meetings in Rabat in 2006, and the planning meeting in Dakar in 2007, that African affiliates of the International Federation of Journalists should establish the Federation of African Journalists in order to defend social and professional rights of journalists and to support freedom of media throughout the continent of Africa,

*Reiterating* the calls of African affiliates supported by the decisions of IFJ World Congresses in Athens (2004) and Moscow (2007) reaffirming actions to establish the Federation of African Journalists;

*Believing* that it is urgent for journalists and media staff to work together to meet the challenges facing all workers in defence of social, professional and gender rights, and the struggle for media freedom in Africa;

*Reaffirming* the commitment of the journalists through their trade unions and associations to participate in poverty reduction strategies and media development on the continent;

## **Hereby launch the Federation of African Journalists**

The Federation, which shall act as the representative voice of journalists in the media industry in Africa, is made up of national unions and associations in Africa. It supports and includes within its network the Western African Journalists Association, the Southern Africa Journalists Association, the Central African Union of Journalists, the Northern African Network of Journalists and the Eastern African Journalists Association, and shall deal with all matters related to freedom of expression and the social and professional rights of journalists under the guidance and association of the International Federation of Journalists.

In particular, the Federation will

Campaign for trade union rights for journalists and will seek to establish a minimum set of standards for labour rights in Africa and seek to develop effective social dialogue across the region with the aim of improving working conditions for all journalists;

Defend freedom of expression and the professional independence of journalists and shall campaign vigorously for media freedom in Africa, if necessary in partnership

with governments and others on the basis of full respect for media pluralism and editorial freedom from all forms of political or economic interference;

Co-ordinate actions to improve the safety and security of journalists and work with the IFEX, the International News Safety Institute, and international agencies to confront impunity and build a culture of safety in journalism;

Seek to ensure that the voice of African journalists is heard in all discussions on the defence of media freedom and journalists' rights in Africa, by seeking immediately observer status within the African Union and its agencies and the recognition of the agencies of the United Nations;

Campaign for the inclusion of media development programmes in all social and economic development and poverty reduction programmes in Africa and for all media development programmes to be led and driven by African media professionals;

Develop a comprehensive working programme, including the establishment of the Africa Solidarity Fund of the IFJ to strengthen national unions in their trade union work their defence of journalists' rights;

Improve communications and co-ordination between national and sub-regional journalists' groups.

In its work the Federation will bring light to the issues facing journalists on the continent and will inform and equip journalists' unions' leaders on the opportunities and ways to play their role as media workers voice in the building of democracy in Africa.

Finally, the Congress **agrees** to establish a steering committee, made up of IFJ Executive Committee members from the region, the leaders of the sub-regional organisations of journalists and hosted by the Nigeria Union of Journalists, in liaison with the IFJ General Secretary, to prepare the inaugural statutory congress of the Federation of African Journalists which shall be held by the end of 2008.

The participants extend their appreciation and thanks to the Nigerian Union of Journalists and their partners for their solidarity, generosity and assistance in organising this historic Congress

*Done in Abuja, November 12, 2007*

### **The African Journalists Congress**

National unions and participants from:

*Nigeria, Gambia, Kenya, Tanzania, Morocco, Congo (Brazzaville), Burkina Faso, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Chad, Niger, Togo, Zimbabwe, Zambia, South Africa.*

Representatives of:

*International Federation of Journalists  
Western African Journalists Association  
Northern African Journalists' Network  
Eastern Africa Journalists Association  
Southern Africa Journalists Association*