

## **Presentation on the African Media Barometer (AMB):**

### **What is it and why is it supported by the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation?**

*by Dr. Stefan Chrobot, Resident Director of the Tanzania Office of Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation, on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, May 3 2011 at Mlimani City Hall, Dar es Salaam*

The African Media Barometer is an in-depth and comprehensive description and measurement system for national media environment on the African continent. FES offices all over Africa are supporting partners in AMB-activities covering about 25 countries. Here in the southern region, where Tanzania is part of in terms of SADC, we have been cooperating closely with the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) in a very fruitful and successful interaction.

The AMB is a self-assessment exercise based on home grown criteria derived from important Africans Protocols and Declarations like the “Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa” or set by the “African Commission for Human and Peoples’ Rights. It also takes up the idea of the “African Peer Review Mechanism” on good governance and applies it to the media at a national level.

Every two years a panel of experts, consisting of media practitioners and representatives from civil society, meets to assess the media situation in their own country. After discussing the national media environment for two days along predetermines indicators they will score in an anonymous vote on a scale from “1” to “5”. If the country does not meet the indicator the score would be “1”. If the country meets all aspects of the indicator the score would be “5” as the best result possible. As the final outcome of each AMB measurement for a respective country there will be a qualitative report summarizes the general content of the discussions. Also the average score for each indicator will be reported as well as the overall score of the country.

These reports measuring the media development of a particular country will then be published and they are available for anybody who is interested in them. It is our intention to provide them for the stakeholders in the media industry, for political decision makers and for nongovernmental organizations dealing with media and information freedom as a qualified basis for political discussion and decision making processes on media reform and the freedom on information.

Let me take the example for AMB on Tanzania. Here the overall average score was “2.4” in 2006. In 2008 the overall country score was again 2.4 and in 2010 it was “2.5”. That means concluded from the measurement of the AMB the national media environment in Tanzania has neither deteriorated nor improved to a significant extend. An outcome like this with its specified assessments related to each indicator could then encourage civil society, parliamentarians and those in governments in charge for media and information in their efforts for media reform. In this context the panelists of the AMB 2010 for Tanzania have agreed on a number of measures to be undertaken to improve the media environment of their country. These include e.g. the facilitation of a debate on digital conversion for broadcasting, strengthening the rights of journalists and improving the standards for journalism and also an increased advocacy on the enactment of media reform bills.

We as Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation wish to advocate and support press freedom and information rights as part of the universal human and civil rights of any person. Here in Tanzania we are surrounded by a free and democratic environment for the debate of media reform and information rights. Together with our partners from non-governmental organizations, those institutions responsible within the government and with the democratically elected representatives of the people we intend to continue this cooperation in the context of the AMB. We therefore encourage all to continue with an open, critical and fruitful debate on media reform and further improvement of the media environment.