

Center for International Media Assistance

In 2006, NED established the Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA) with encouragement from the Congress and a grant from the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. CIMA aims to strengthen the support, raise the visibility, and improve the effectiveness of programs that support independent media throughout the world.

Independent media are an inextricable element of democratic society. Citizens rely on information from the media to make informed decisions and hold their leaders accountable. Free media act as a catalyst for political reform, contribute to consolidation of democracy, and facilitate the unfettered exchange of ideas necessary for the development of civil society.

CIMA brings together a broad range of media experts with the goal of enhancing the coherence, effectiveness, and prominence of media assistance within the broader field of democracy promotion. CIMA issues reports and makes recommendations aimed at policymakers and funders that highlight priority areas for funding and help media-assistance implementers fine-tune their activities in the field.

CIMA's core activities—convening experts to discuss issues in the media assistance field and make recommendations, commissioning research, and functioning as a catalyst for media development initiatives—complement NED's role as a supporter of grassroots democracy initiatives and address many of the challenges that have been identified in the field of U.S.-sponsored development of independent and sustainable media.

Events

On May 2, 2007, CIMA hosted its inaugural event celebrating World Press Freedom Day at the U.S. Capitol building. Honorary co-hosts of the event were Senators Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) and Chris Dodd (D-Conn.), and Representatives Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) and Michael Pence (R-Ind.), co-founders of the Congressional Caucus for the Freedom of the Press. The event included the launch of a book considered groundbreaking in assessing the media assistance field—*Media Matters: Perspectives on Advancing Governance and Development from the Global Forum for Media Development*.

In the ensuing months, CIMA hosted a number of events. In June, CIMA and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation released a report by the Jefferson Institute, *An Imperative to Innovate: Sustainable Journalism Training in Central and Eastern Europe*. In September, CIMA hosted the U.S. launch of a report by the Panos Institute of London, *At the Heart of Change: The Role of Communication in Sustainable Development*, which argues that media play a central role in economic development and good governance.

CIMA also held events that exam-



Participants at a CIMA working group on establishing a legal enabling environment for independent media, held on May 18, 2007.



ine the state of the media in specific countries. In 2007, these included events on Somalia, where journalists face injury or death, threats, arrest, and government closure of media outlets, and on Sudan, where journalists confront government restrictions, logistical hurdles, financial constraints, and lack of security. Following the latter event, CIMA published a paper summarizing the presentations, *The State of Media in Sudan*.

Working Groups

CIMA has organized working groups that bring together an array of media assistance practitioners and funders, government officials, academics, and other experts to discuss best practices and recommendations. In 2007, it held working group sessions on the legal enabling environment for independent media, economic sustainability of inde-



Meg Gaydosik, the senior media development, rights, and tolerance advisor for the Europe and Eurasia Bureau at USAID, comments on Panos London's newly released report *At the Heart of Change: The Role of Communication in Sustainable Development*, which calls on policymakers and development organizations to integrate communications into development planning and implementation. To her right are Mark Wilson of Panos London, Marguerite Sullivan of CIMA/NED, and Shanthi Kalathil of the World Bank.

pendent media in developing countries, the professional development of journalists, and community radio development. To share these discussions with a broader audience, CIMA issued reports summarizing the findings and recommendations of each session.

Research and Reports

CIMA also commissioned research on a variety of topics in the media assistance field, releasing the following reports in 2007: *University Journalism Education: A Global Challenge*, which includes information from the inaugural World Journalism Educa-



tion Congress; *Independent Media's Vital Role in Development*; *Global Investigative Journalism: Strategies for Support*; and *U.S. Public and Private Funding of Independent Media Development Abroad*. Also in 2007, CIMA compiled and put online for public use a bibliography of more than 600 books, reports, articles, working papers, and manuals relevant to the field of international media assistance. This bibliography will continue to be expanded with additional materials. Through NED's grant-making programs, CIMA also encouraged

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professional media networking groups, such as the Global Forum for Media Development, a network of media-assistance funders, implementers, practitioners, and independent media groups, and IJNet, an online resource for journalists, journalism trainers and educators, and media assistance professionals, published by the International Center for Journalists.

CIMA's work is guided by its Advisory Council, comprising prominent media professionals, academics, representatives of donor organizations, and other experts in the field of international media.