

PRESS RELEASE ON THE WORKSHOP GATHERING THE HEAD OF STATE, MEDIA MANAGERS AND PROFESSIONALS

On January 27 and 28, 2021, in the premises of the Kiriri Garden hotel, the Ministry of Communication, Information Technology and Media in collaboration with media managers and professionals, organized a workshop to discuss "the role and responsibility of the media in the development of the country and to promote social harmony and the protection of human rights".

On the first day, participants had the opportunity to follow four presentations namely:

1. Professional conduct and ethics to promote social harmony and the protection of human rights
2. Social responsibility of the media
3. The use of communication devices and the management of fake news: Case of social networks and the online press
4. The role of media managers and journalists in the country's development: Case of Burundi

As such, participants took part in group works, after which they issued recommendations to the public authorities, partners, press organs and media professionals.

On the second and last day, the participants were honoured to discuss with the Head of State HE Evariste NDAYISHIMIYE on the concept of responsible and laborious institutions.

The Head of State, in his remarks, congratulated the media professionals for this initiative, and provided them with advice with regard to the respect for deontology, professional ethics and the laws in force. He further invited them:

- to become more involved in the implementation of national socio-economic development policies as Burundian citizens.
- conscientiously play their role of relay between the population and the administration with a sense of responsibility.

His Excellency the President of the Republic recommended to the National Council of Communication (CNC) in collaboration with all the stakeholders, to sit down together to find solutions so that the situation which had led some media to close their doors is cleaned up as soon as possible.

The Head of State subsequently responded to some concerns brought to him by media officials. This is among other things related to the annual royalties paid in currency by radio and television stations to the Control and Regulation Agency, ARCT, the issue relevant to the operationalization of the Burundi Digital Broadcasting Company (STNB).

To all these questions, the President of the Republic invited the Minister of Communication, Information Technologies and the Media to address them in collaboration with all stakeholders. He also indicated that there are no longer any obstacles to the STNB starting operations.

The Head of State pledged that the Government of Burundi will continue to support the media sector for the promotion of a free and responsible press in order to strengthen democratic culture and freedom of expression.

In conclusion, media professionals are committed to:

- Regularly organize training sessions to address the problem of non-compliance with ethics and professional conduct;
- Promote social cohesion and the development of the population through their media productions;
- Contribute to changing mentalities by promoting the culture of peace and safeguarding national unity;
- Promote a culture of verifying information collected on social networks in order to combat disinformation and the manipulation of information;
- Support the implementation of national development policies;
- popularize the good initiatives of the population in terms of development.
- Enlighten the population on socio-economic development and social cohesion.

To end well, the managers and media professionals as well as the senior executives of the Presidency of the Republic and the Ministry of Communication present closed the workshop with a ceremony of exchanging vows with the Head of State.

Done in Bujumbura on 01/28/2021