



Association of Caribbean Mediaworkers

Unit 1, Upper Level, Elan Place, 137 Eastern Main Rd,

St. Augustine, Trinidad & Tobago

T: 1 (868) 296-8009

E: acmmail@gmail.com

W: www.acmediaworkers.com

STATEMENT BY THE ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN MEDIA WORKERS ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY 2005

May 3, 2005 - The Association of Caribbean Media Workers (ACM) joins with the world community in recognising World Press Freedom Day 2005.

Such an observance provides us with the opportunity to reflect on the vast opportunities being made available through the use of new information and communication technology and the enlightened debates that are occurring globally on the great promise this brings to modern day civilisation.

We also applaud governments of the Caribbean Community that have stuck to their commitment to implement the free movement provisions of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy with respect to media workers.

We pay tribute to those who have over the years pursued such an objective with passion and diligence and recognise the fact that an increasing number of regional journalists have already taken advantage of the opportunities this new situation brings.

But this occasion also gives rise to considerable contemplation on the numerous challenges being faced by journalists and their media institutions everywhere.

The Caribbean region has, for example, proven to be no exception in a disturbingly pervasive environment within which free speech and a free press are viewed as virtual impediments to the process of development and social cohesion.

In that regard, we bring to the attention of the region, the remark by United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day 2005, that “the right to ‘seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media’ is enshrined in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

“Censorship, the suppression of information, intimidation and interference are a denial of democracy, an obstacle to development, and a threat to the security of all,” the Secretary-General says.

While the Caribbean has, by and large, escaped the worst effects of violence against journalists, we have not evaded the onslaught of misguided official policies, the blinkered commercial agendas of media owners and managers and the under-developed nature of our thrust to develop a cadre of well-equipped and trained media professionals.



Association of Caribbean Mediaworkers

Unit 1, Upper Level, Elan Place, 137 Eastern Main Rd,

St. Augustine, Trinidad & Tobago

T: 1 (868) 296-8009

E: acmmail@gmail.com

W: www.acmediaworkers.com

Governments and their agencies continue to willfully ignore constitutional guarantees of free speech and a free press and hemispheric and international obligations to observe the value of free expression as an inalienable human right.

Additionally, media owners and managers continue not to invest in the promotion of professional development and, in some instances, impose conditions of self-censorship to promote commercial and political agendas.

The ACM is also gravely concerned that growth in the media industry in most Caribbean territories is not being matched by the requisite level of education and training among new journalists.

Our organisation has devoted much of its attention to this particular element of the challenges we confront and is not convinced that a high level of commitment exists within the industry itself.

At this time, we however pay tribute to the regional, hemispheric and international agencies that have extended hands of friendship and cooperation to the ACM and the media workers we represent.

We look forward to both deepening and widening the scope of these relations in the building of a greater degree of collaboration.