



# Association of Caribbean Mediaworkers

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## ACM WANTS MORE EMPHASIS ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

May 03, 2006 - The Association of Caribbean MediaWorkers (ACM) joins with media colleagues everywhere in commemorating World Press Freedom Day 2006.

The changing face of mass media has challenged us all to explore new dimensions of the communication process and to better understand the implications of such change on the practice of journalism, some of the fundamental underpinnings of the profession and official action meant to address the new dynamic.

Sadly, in the Caribbean, the latter has routinely tended in the direction of regulatory sanction and censorship. There has too often been a pattern of enforced silence as the preferred method of addressing acknowledged, professional shortcomings in the face of a changing social and technological landscape.

The ACM is attempting to address some areas of professional need and has reported several successful attempts over the past four years at raising standards in designated areas of media reportage.

It is however true that journalists and their bosses in the region need to pay more attention to programmes of professional development. It is also true that in too many instances, some fall prey to the lure or political and commercial enticements. But it is also abundantly evident, that the vast majority of Caribbean media professionals are committed to the highest standards and the pursuit of truth.

In too many instances, however, the absence of eternal vigil by our national communities has led to an erosion of the freedoms we have laboured to enjoy.

Criminal defamation remains on the statute books of our societies with only rare objection. Broadcast media liberalisation is being accompanied by anachronistic notions of information control and blatant attempts at censorship with few detractors in sight. And, remedies for our perceived state of social chaos and disorder too often and too readily include prescriptions to abridge our freedoms.

We are nevertheless increasingly encouraged by the fact that many media workers in the region are beginning to display a greater willingness to unite and to become organised. Though some longstanding organisations teeter on the brink of imminent and total collapse, we have witnessed the birth and growth of new ones elsewhere.



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The ACM considers amongst its most sacred tasks the work to build national associations where they do not now exist and to renew those that have gone to sleep.

The ACM Executive has taken up this responsibility with utmost zeal and we believe we have already experienced some positive results.

Our wish on this important occasion is to witness the achievement of a Caribbean media landscape that builds stronger bridges between the state and civil society, one capable of empowering the alienated and weak and making the difference between the flourishing of Caribbean society and the current threats to its viable existence.