



Association of Caribbean Mediaworkers

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REMARKS OF ACM PRESIDENT, DALE ENOCH AT OPENING CEREMONY OF WPFD WORKSHOP IN ST LUCIA – MAY 2, 2007

I wish on behalf of the ACM community to thank you for your presence here today as we observe World Press Freedom Day.

Now in our sixth year, we use this occasion on an annual basis to review the path we have travelled as a professional organisation, concerned with the free press for free societies.

World Press Freedom Day 2007 finds us short of the mark as an organisation, but it does not meet us off target. We are convinced today, more than ever, that the course we set ourselves in 2001 is the correct one – that an agenda for change in Caribbean media must focus on professional development, finding common region-wide professional ground and ensuring that we operate in an environment of freedom and progress.

But we remain short of the mark with respect to the presence of a permanent, professional outfit addressing these critical needs. We are in need of a home and resources to match the growing demands being made on us to operate as a truly representative organisation on behalf of Caribbean media workers.

We need to develop mechanisms to monitor and respond to breaches of free speech and free press provisions in our respective jurisdictions; we need to develop a capacity to research and report on the development of the industry; we need to monitor and respond in a timely fashion to the failure by some governments not to fully honour the free movement provisions of the CSME and we need to apply more rigorously the demands of our code of professional conduct.

We believe these functions of the ACM will constitute the legacy of our work for years and years to come. Our membership base has now grown to include journalists from the Spanish, French and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. We have earned hemispheric and international recognition as the sole representative organisation for Caribbean journalists and our record on the protection of freedom of the press is a badge of honour we wear with pride.

I thank UNESCO and our institutional partners present here for the confidence placed in us. I also thank the journalistic community of St Lucia for so graciously hosting us in this place that is 'simply beautiful'. I urge you to continue in your effort to establish a functioning national association and to join the ACM community as an equal partner.

Since our establishment, associations in St Kitts and Nevis, St Maarten and Antigua and Barbuda have appeared. It is the preferred route to affiliation with



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the ACM, but not the role mechanism. We have maintained the avenue of individual membership and will continue to do so, since the freedom to associate must include the freedom not to associate.

Again, I thank you for your presence and I restate the commitment of the ACM to work in partnership with everyone interested in preserving the precious freedom to express oneself. On this special occasion we also find time to re-dedicate ourselves to the task of preserving the concomitant rights of a free press.