

A meeting was held over two days on September 11th and 12th 2009, jointly sponsored by the Guyana Press Association and the Canadian High Commission. Participants included:

- Fifteen working journalists from Guyanese print and broadcast houses.
- Three representatives from the ACB and MMU.
- A representative from the Centre for Communication Studies at the University of Guyana.
- The two Independent Media Referees from the 2006 election.
- The President of the Association of Caribbean Media Workers.
- Two co-facilitators, one from Canada and one from Guyana.

The participants agreed on the following points:

1. We are committed to the principle of media self-regulation, because:
 - a. It serves the public good.
 - b. It improves the quality of media output.
 - c. It provides guidance to journalists.
 - d. It enhances the credibility of the media and public trust in it.
2. The essential elements for an effective regime of media self-regulation are:
 - a code of conduct; and
 - a mechanism for its implementation.
3. The 2006 Media Code of Conduct is a strong and useful document. It should be used as the basis for the formulation of a Code that is permanently applicable.
4. There are a number of other codes that can usefully be drawn upon to further improve the Media Code of Conduct. We have drawn up some preliminary “specifications” to assist the drafters of the Code.
5. The drafting process should begin immediately, and be finished by November 15, 2009. A small group of working journalists and media proprietors – including representatives from state and private print and broadcast outlets, and other respected experts – should do this work. Several participants at the meeting would be pleased to join this group.
6. The Media Monitoring Unit has produced objective reports on media houses’ performance relative to the existing Media Code of Conduct and other relevant standards – during and since the 2006 election.
7. However, since the election, circulation of these reports has been limited. We strongly urge that the reports should be widely disseminated to the media and the public.
8. We also believe that the resources and expertise that reside in both the MMU and the ACB should be utilized when creating the mechanism for implementing the new Media Code of Conduct.
9. Ownership of this initiative ought to be shared by organizations representing the interests of Guyanese media house proprietors and working journalists.
10. Input and support is also expected from other media organizations across the Caribbean.
11. Civil society, political parties and the public at large ought to be consulted throughout the process – which ought to be as transparent and inclusive as possible.