

Be professional to earn public trust, Malupenga challenges media

Information and Broadcasting Services Permanent Secretary Amos Malupenga has challenged the media to be above board and observe professional standards to earn public trust and confidence.

Mr. Malupenga says this is important in the journalism profession is to given the respect it deserves and remain relevant in public affairs.

Speaking during the launch of the Trust in the Media Baseline Report in Lusaka today, Mr. Malupenga said public trust in the media is not free and as such it should be earned through high level professional and ethical conduct on the part of the media.

He said the report which has cited a number of issues as contributing factors to loss of public trust and confidence in the media was important as it would help the media to assess their relationship with the public to whom their loyalty must be.

“This report, therefore, serves as a timely reminder for the media in Zambia to be professional at every given time and to ensure that professional ethics remain key guiding principles in their operations,” Mr. Malupenga said.

He warned the media against the temptation of abusing public confidence and trust in the media to advance their personal agenda especially that people are now much more knowledgeable.

“It can no longer be business as usual because the public, now, more than ever before, is more knowledgeable and able to analyse issues in a much deeper sense. The media cannot afford to mislead them by imposing their biased views and sometimes misinformed opinions on them,” he added.

Mr. Malupenga said the media must be above board and always base their judgment on professional and ethical standards.

Meanwhile, Mr. Malupenga has said Government will ensure that enough space and latitude is provided for journalists to do their work in a professional manner because society depends on them for information on various issues affecting their wellbeing.

He said Government will continue to insist that the journalism profession must be protected by ensuring that a mechanism for media self-regulation is put in place.

He said Government is confident that once enacted, the media self-regulatory mechanism will help cure some of the findings contained in the report because all media practitioners will be compelled to abide by their own rules while only those qualified to practise as journalists will be allowed to do so.

He commended Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA) Zambia and its partners for undertaking a survey to determine public trust in the media.

And MISA Zambia Chairperson Hellen Mwale said the news media is a lens through which people view society and the world at large and as such must be professional reliable, truthful and trusted.

In a speech read on her behalf by MISA Zambia Governing Board member Martin Akende, Ms. Mwale said a free media is essential in helping citizens to make well-informed decisions.

Ms. Mwale observed that in the past decade the media has undergone serious disruptions with disinformation and misinformation becoming the order of the day.

She said MISA Zambia will continue investing and supporting the kind of journalism that takes a step back from the headlines and empower audiences by giving them more context and explanation.

She added that this kind of journalism will help restore faith in news that people can trust, and information they can rely on.

The report is based on findings in three countries where the survey was conducted.

These include Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Press and Public Relations Unit
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services
24th July, 2020