



Paris, France and Nairobi, Kenya, 19 January 2012

For immediate release

New Partnership Launched for African Media

The African Media Initiative (AMI) and the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) have launched an ambitious strategic partnership to provide professional training and other forms of technical support to develop media businesses across the African continent.

The partnership will include a series of joint projects aimed at strengthening media business in Africa, expanding access to finance and development of new revenue streams, harnessing the digital revolution through technological adaptation and innovation, and building a competent leadership of the media sector through a commitment to improved ethics and management.

The two organizations will work together specifically on developing digital innovation for the African media industry, the development of a pan-African curricula and training in media management, joint research activities, and advocacy of press freedom, quality reporting and other areas.

WAN-IFRA (<http://www.wan-ifra.org>) is the global organisation of the world's press, representing 18,000 newspapers, 15,000 online sites and more than 3,000 companies in 120 countries.

AMI (<http://www.africanmediainitiative.org>) is the continent's primary umbrella association of African media owners, top executives and other key industry stakeholders.

“We are delighted to enter into this strategic partnership with WAN-IFRA, one of the most trusted media development institutions in the world,” commented Amadou Mahtar Ba, the CEO of AMI.

“Our industry is undergoing profound changes that redefine the ways news and information are collected, distributed and consumed around the world, particularly in Africa. It is therefore essential for AMI to partner with the best available knowledge sources in order to fully fulfill its mission to support the emergence of a professional and sustainable media landscape on the continent,” he added.

Christoph Riess, the CEO of WAN-IFRA, said: "AMI has emerged as a thought leader in Africa for top-level media executives, and is active in defending press freedom and the professional interests of media. We are looking forward to working together to further the development of strong media companies in Africa through a joint and coordinated effort that engages stakeholders, especially in the private sector. Cooperation is a key to success."

Among other initiatives, AMI conducts the African News Innovation Challenge, which provides seed funding and other support for creative solutions to challenges facing the African media. WAN-IFRA will provide media management training to the project. The Omidyar Network, Google, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, and the U.S. Department of State have all pledged either funding or technical support for the initiative.

AMI also organises the African Media Leaders Forum (AMLF) (<http://www.africanmedialeadersforum.org>), the only gathering of media owners, operators and senior executives on the continent.

WAN-IFRA conducts a number of press freedom and media development initiatives in Africa under its strategic partnership with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). These include the Declaration of Table Mountain, which seeks to eliminate criminal defamation and insult laws in Africa, the Women in News Project, which helps advance the careers of female media executives in southern Africa, and its Mobile News in Africa Project, which aims to test and implement innovative content production and mobile delivery models. More on the global projects conducted under the WAN-IFRA and SIDA partnership can be found at <http://www.wan-ifra.org/microsites/media-development>

AMI is platform and medium agnostic, and represents media across all traditional and newer digital platforms. AMI members include individual media companies and other news producers, as well as media trade associations. AMI's mandate is to serve as a catalyst for strengthening African media, by building the tools, knowledge resources, and technical capacity for African media to play an effective public interest role in their societies. This includes assisting with the development of professional standards, financial sustainability, technological adaptability, and civic engagement.

As a global platform for the newspaper industry, WAN-IFRA brings together publishers, editors and media trade associations from across the world and has played a central role in the development of newspaper markets world-wide. WAN-IFRA's unique position as a newspaper industry organisation with a human rights mandate is reflected in the organisation's conviction that financially healthy media outlets is an essential condition for the existence of a free press.

Inquiries to:

Larry Kilman, Deputy CEO, Executive Director of Communications and Public Affairs, WAN-IFRA, 96 bis rue Beaubourg, 75003 Paris, France. Phone: +33 1 47 42 85 07, Fax: +33 1 42 78 92 33.

E-mail: larry.kilman@wan-ifra.org

Amadou Mahtar Ba, CEO, African Media Initiative (AMI), 6th Floor, Fedha Plaza, Mpaka Road, Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya. Phone +254 20 269 4004, fax +254 20 210 6274

Email: info@africanmediainitiative.org