EDITORS'

BREAKFAST FORUM

Editors Guild of Ethiopia ———————— 2023

MESSAGE FROM
Editors Guild of Ethiopia

"In collaboration with the International Media Support (IMS), the Editor's Guild of Ethiopia (EGE) proudly presents the successful culmination of 13-morning breakfast sessions tailored for editors from diverse media platforms—broadcast, print, and online—in Ethiopia.

This inaugural season of our flagship initiative has underscored the dedication of Ethiopian editors to collaboration and drive discussions, steering the Ethiopian media sector toward progress. EGE and our esteemed partners are committed to nurturing and perpetuating this invaluable platform into 2024.

Our vision is to empower media leaders to shape the industry's trajectory over the years ahead collectively. This platform is a pivotal force, not merely defining and safeguarding the media ecosystem but also bridging gaps in countering detrimental narratives within digital media. It is a bastion against media polarization, advocates for self-regulation, and fosters mentorship for aspiring journalists.

The success of the 13 episodes in the pilot season owes much to the generous technical and financial support extended by IMS. EGE expresses deep gratitude to all organizations and individuals whose remarkable efforts have contributed to this success."

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

Editors Guild of Ethiopia (EGE)

Established on October 29, 2019, and officially registered by the FDRE Agency for Civil Society Organizations under registrar number 4527, the Editors Guild of Ethiopia (EGE) stands as a beacon of professional development and unity within the Ethiopian media landscape.

At EGE, the commitment remains unwavering, dedicated to providing members representing editors from print, broadcast, and digital media platforms across Ethiopia with various resources, support, and training opportunities. The mission revolves around fostering a robust media environment of freedom and independence.

As a membership-based professional association, we take immense pride in offering a platform that connects editors across Ethiopia and the globe. The overarching goal is to enhance media freedom while promoting the safety of journalists, advocating for an enabling media environment, and fortifying the capacity of both members and media houses.

Membership at EGE transcends a mere status; it represents a commitment to a shared passion for advancing media freedom and quality journalism in Ethiopia. Together, there's an aspiration to create an empowered community of media professionals, fortifying the pillars of ethical journalism and fostering an environment conducive to media integrity and growth. This vision led to the launch of the first-of-its-kind Media Breakfast forum in Ethiopia, initiated by the Guild and its partners.

Forum Overview:

In partnership with IMS, EGE initiated a groundbreaking series of weekly Breakfast Forum tailored for 30 news editors across broadcast, print, and online media domains on August 10, 2023. These gatherings represent a cornerstone in EGE's strategic interventions, aiming to foster collaborative action among key stakeholders within the Ethiopian media ecosystem.

The primary objective behind launching this weekly forum was to actively engage Ethiopian Editors in championing media freedom and upholding ethical journalism standards. This deliberate design sought to cultivate an environment that encourages interaction and collaboration among editors, catalyzing collective action and unified efforts.

These regular meetings and dialogues amplify the impact of EGE's projects and play a pivotal role in fostering greater unity, cooperation, and solidarity among various media houses. The platform facilitates collective bargaining and collaborative actions while reinforcing the principles of media self-regulation and accountability within Ethiopia's media landscape.

Throughout the pilot program, 13 weekly breakfast sessions were meticulously organized at the Hilton Hotel. The sessions, by covering diverse topics such as media independence, sexual harassment and inclusion in media houses, access to information, human rights, information disorder, safety of journalists, and climate communication, exemplify the commitment to comprehensive and critical discussions.

Main Objectives:

- Collaborative Advocacy: Engage in effective advocacy for implementing legal and policy reforms that significantly impact freedom of speech, access to information, and assembly.

- Professionalism Promotion: Foster professionalism in the sector, empowering ethical and professional journalists to assume more prominent roles within the industry.

- Media Solidarity: Promote solidarity within the media landscape, cultivating an environment of mutual support and collaboration.

- Advocacy for Safety: Effectively advocate and negotiate for the safety of journalists and media houses, ensuring a secure working environment.

- Capacity Building: Enhance the capacity of editors through comprehensive issue-oriented sessions, equipping them with essential skills and knowledge.

- Media Self-Regulation: Advocate for and promote the principles of media self-regulation, contributing to ethical practices within the industry.

- Combatting Harmful Content: Enable legacy media to counter-narratives of hate speech, misinformation, and harmful content, particularly through online platforms.

- Public Confidence Enhancement: Ensure better public confidence in Ethiopian media by fostering transparency, accuracy, and accountability.

- **Confidentiality Notice:**

The proceedings within this documentation adhere to the application of Chatham House Rules, a measure proposed and embraced to safeguard the sanctity of open discussions held during the Editors' Breakfast Forum. This approach results from considerations regarding the delicate nature of discussions and respecting the confidentiality and privacy of our esteemed editors.

The utilization of Chatham House Rules ensures that specific identities, names, or direct attributions to individual participants are intentionally omitted from this documentation. The primary goal is to uphold an environment conducive to open dialogue, where editors feel free to candidly discuss challenges, insights, and perspectives without fear of repercussions.

While the essence of discussions and critical themes are captured faithfully within these proceedings, individual identities remain undisclosed, aligning with the commitment to protect the privacy and integrity of our participants. This measure nurtures trust and maintains the safe space essential for constructive exchanges within our community of editors.

While the content is comprehensive, it refrains from divulging specific details or attributions to individual participants, adhering to the agreed-upon framework of confidentiality and trust established within the Editors' Breakfast Forum.

FORUMSECTIONS

EDITORS'
BREAKFAST FORUM

Forum #1: Launching of Editors' Breakfast Forum

- Date: [August 10, 2023]
- Speaker/s: EGE Board member and Representative of International Media Support (IMS)
  - Speakers' Background: Both are eminent from the print media sector and have had years of experience as newsroom editors.

PRESENTATION

- Topic: Breakfast Forum: Peer-to-peer Experience Sharing Platform
- Key Highlights:

EGE will remain committed to building solidarity in the editor's community in Ethiopia.
IMS' interest is to support EGE and mobilize Ethiopian editors in promoting media interests and collectively bargaining for media freedom in Ethiopia.
Participants introduced themselves and briefly reflected on their editorial leadership peculiarities and expectations from the sessions.
Following the introduction, EGE delivered a presentation on the vision and objectives of the Editors' Breakfast Forum.
The planned structure of the sessions was presented for discussion.
The date and time of the sessions were presented to the participants to discuss and commit to.
Topics for discussion were also presented for further discussions and validation.

DISCUSSION
SYNTHESIS

- Discussions should emphasize editorial decision-making perspectives, focusing on how topics impact editors' decision-making efforts.
- Sessions should commence with a media review of the preceding week for a better context.
- Incorporate discussions about journalists' livelihoods and challenges within the Ethiopian media landscape.
- Thursday at 8 am is considered a suitable time slot.
- Prioritize professionalism to maintain and practice ethical standards within media houses.
- Allocate multiple sessions to discuss gender and media topics.
- Focus on peer-to-peer experience sharing rather than dissecting media house roles in content.

- Address sensitivity in reporting as an integral part of the discussion topics.
- Align discussions with current realities on the ground.
- Encourage editors to share their experiences related to each topic.
- Consider collaboration with other agencies for broader perspectives.
- Ensure that sessions don't resemble training sessions.
- Engage media owners/managers for endorsement and sustainable participation of their editors.
- Emphasize the unique nature of the Breakfast Forum and its focus on editorial decision-making procedures.
- Propose the first discussion as an independent editorial decision-making session.

"

EGE must engage media owners/managers and ensure their endorsement and consent so that they can sustainably assign their editors to such engagements.

"

We better focus on what the Breakfast Forum is not (as it is not a training session or editorial meeting). Editorial decision-making procedures in each topics must be the optical understanding we all should have.

ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

Established Time and Date: Settled on Thursdays from 8 am to 10 am for future sessions, providing a consistent schedule.

Focused Topics on Editorial Decision-Making: Emphasized framing discussions around editorial decision-making practices and editor roles. Consideration of signup sheets for upcoming sessions was suggested to streamline participation.

Agreed Topic for Next Session: Unanimously decided on "Independent Editorial Decision Making" as the focal point for the upcoming session, aiming for a deeper exploration of this critical aspect.

EDITORS'
BREAKFAST FORUM

Forum #2: Media Independence

- Date: August 17, 2023
- **Speaker: Editor**
  - Speaker's Background: The speaker comes from a print media with editorial experience. Possessing enormous background in the media and active engagement in efforts to improve Ethiopia's media environment, the speaker is considered an ideal candidate for the topic.

PRESENTATION

- Media Independence: How editorial decision making can be achieved in newsrooms and society
- Key Highlights:

Internal Governance for Editorial Independence: Emphasized the need for robust internal structures within media houses to ensure independent editorial decision-making, avoiding government interference.

Sharing Best Practices: Acknowledged the significance of platforms like this Breakfast Forum in exchanging experiences among media houses, promoting collective learning.

Collective Action against Interference: Advocated continuous collective bargaining to combat self-censorship and government or third-party meddling, focusing on public interest frameworks in content creation.

Legal Frameworks and Financial Dependency: Highlighted Ethiopian law's stance on Editor-in-Chief Independence and limitations on media owners' involvement. They addressed financial dependence as a crucial factor influencing editorial decisions.

Professional Associations' Role: Emphasized the need for professional associations to collaborate on trend analysis and establish accountability mechanisms for public interest journalism.

Unity among Editors: Advocated for editors to unite and advocate for media independence, identifying issues and crafting recommendations through consensus-building and advocacy.

Coalition Building for Editorial Independence: Encouraged editors to promote coalition building and network participation to advance better editorial independence standards in Ethiopia

Self-regulation and Consensus Building: Editors should utilize platforms like breakfast forums to foster self-regulation, build consensus on matters affecting editorial independence, engage in advocacy efforts, set standards promoting media independence in Ethiopia, and effectively communicate with the public to build trust and engage them in media-related causes.

DISCUSSION
SYNTHESIS

- Media Law vs. Reality: Empowerment through media law doesn't always translate to absolute independence in editorial decisions.

- Decentralized Editorial Decision Making: The trend of decentralized decision-making in newsrooms requires empowering the Editor-in-Chief without interference. Solidarity among newsrooms is crucial to protect the Editor-in-Chief's autonomy.

- Identifying Pressure Sources: There is a need for mapping and researching sources of pressure on Editor-in-Chiefs hindering independent decision-making. Editors must assess their ability to cope with existing challenges and pressures.

- Promoting Solidarity and Collaboration: Advocacy for solidarity among editors to combat safety violations and sustain collective bargaining platforms. Engaging media managers/owners to strengthen collaborations for media independence.

- Challenges in Media Landscape: Recognition of an unsupportive media landscape, emphasizing the need for organized resistance against interference.

- Ethical Decision-Making and Capacity Gap: Awareness to address biases in decision-making linked to business relationships with advertisers. Noting the diversity of challenges affecting different media platforms and acknowledging a capacity gap among editors.

- Professional Integrity and Qualifications: Emphasis on defining and setting standards for editor appointments based on qualifications and experience. Call to challenge journalism schools to produce better-qualified journalists.

> Although the law empowers the Editor-in-Chief as the highest decision-making person, media houses should also do the same and empower the Editor-in-Chief the same way and avoid interference.

> Professional integrity of editors must be given attention. We should work together for a regulation that defines and sets the standard for the appointment of editors based on their qualifications and experience.

ACTIONABLE
TAKEAWAYS

Continuous Collective Bargaining: Perpetually engage in collective bargaining to combat self-censorship, external censorship, and interference from government, media owners, or other vested interests.

Standardized Editor Appointment Guidelines: Advocate for standardized regulations governing the appointment of editors within the media industry to ensure qualifications and merit-based selections.

Involvement of Media Managers and Owners: Foster active participation of media managers and owners in collective bargaining discussions concerning critical media issues.

Unified Stand against Safety Violations: Encourage editors to unite and stand up against any safety violations targeting fellow editors, promoting a culture of mutual protection.

Advocacy for Self-Regulation: Promote and encourage the implementation of self-regulatory measures within the media industry to maintain ethical standards and independence.

Advocacy and Lobbying for Balanced Regulations: Engage in advocacy and lobbying efforts to dilute and balance regulations, presenting counter-arguments to ensure fair and unbiased regulatory frameworks.

Forum #3: Access to Information

- Date: August 24, 2023
- Speaker: Media Researcher
  - Speaker's Background: Former political and news editor at a print media organization turned researcher on media issues

PRESENTATION

- Topic: Access to Information; Why does it matter to editorial decision-making?
- Key Highlights:

ORIGIN OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION

1848 UDHR: Freedom of expression includes the right to "seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media."

African Charter: Guarantees the right to receive, express, and disseminate information for individuals.

FDRE Constitution Article 29: Ensures freedom to access and share information irrespective of boundaries.

Proclamation 590/2000: Recognizes everyone's right to access and communicate public information.

NECESSITY OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Facilitates informed decision-making.

Holds entities accountable - businesses, individuals, and governments.

Stimulates innovation and creativity.

Counters information disorder.

Fosters better journalism, contributing to a better society.

VALUE IN EDITORIAL DECISION-MAKING

Essential for editors to make informed decisions on publishing content.

Enables fact verification, source credibility assessment, and judgments on public interest.

Helps avoid biased or inaccurate content publication.

CHALLENGES IN FREE
ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Government and corporate secrecy.

Censorship hindering access.

Lack of accountability.

Deliberate information manipulation.

Inadequate legal protection.

DISINFORMATION
IMPACT

Blurs lines between accurate and inaccurate information.

Creates doubt and undermines trust in institutions.

Limits civic participation and engagement.

ADDRESSING LIMITED
ACCESS CHALLENGES

Strong freedom of information regulations.

Support for independent journalism and fact-checking entities.

Promotion of media literacy.

Investment in education and technology to overcome access barriers.

Engage in robust advocacy efforts.

DISCUSSION
SYNTHESIS

- Access to Information Law Advocacy: There is an urgent need to advocate for the passing of the Access to Information Law, which is beneficial for the media, public, and government.

- Editorial Networking and Beat Reporting: Editors are encouraged to network beyond office confines for more robust connections and promote beat reporting as a crucial practice.

- Public Engagement in Law Preparation and Execution: Emphasis on engaging the public in both the preparation and execution of laws due to structural issues in government monitoring.

- Challenges in Government Information Access: Difficulty faced by public media editors in accessing information from government and private sectors. Collective advocacy proposed to address challenges and raise awareness for better

government commitment.

- Media-Government Information Flow Challenges: Due to government constraints, Editors face limitations in developing press statements into stories. Advocacy for addressing challenges in accessing information collectively reiterated.

- Discouraging Anonymity and Ensuring Transparency: Encouragement for editors to discourage anonymity in content, promote source disclosure, and maintain professionalism. Engagement with stakeholders is needed to fight for free access to information and freely exercise media duties.

- Perceptions and Misconceptions: Recognition of the misconception that the government solely protects public interests while perceiving the media as destructive.

"We must push the government harder to pass the Access to Information Law, which not only benefits the media and public but also the government itself.

"Extracting information from the government offices in Ethiopia has become more and more difficult. And, we have to engage in collective advocacy intervention to create awareness and better commitment from government.

ACTIONABLE
TAKEAWAYS

Active Participation in Policy Development: Editors should actively engage in the formulation of media regulations, contributing to frameworks that promote an enabling media environment.

Advocacy for Access to Information Legislation: Editors must lead advocacy efforts for the passing of the Access to Information law, advocating for transparency and accountability.

Development of Position Papers: Editors should initiate the creation of position papers to advocate for a more conducive media space, presenting solutions and recommendations.

Conducting Situational Mapping for Advocacy: Undertake a comprehensive study to map the media environment, using the findings as a powerful advocacy tool to highlight challenges and push for reforms.

Focus on Solutions and Actionable Steps: Encourage a shift in focus from problems to solutions, fostering discussions and initiatives that actively address challenges within the media landscape.

Regular Advocacy Forums with Government Bodies: Facilitate frequent advocacy and discussion forums involving editors and representatives from government branches (legislative, judiciary, and executive) to address information access challenges.

Promoting Transparency through Accountability: Implement mechanisms for naming and shaming parties that withhold information from the media, promoting transparency and holding accountable those hindering access to information.

Forum #4: Media Inclusion

- Date: August 31, 2023
- Speaker: Gender Specialist
  - Speaker's Background: Former journalist turned gender and inclusivity expert

PRESENTATION

- Topic: Sexual Harassment, Gender Diversity and Inclusion in Media
- Key Highlights:

Understanding Whistleblowing: Definition of whistleblowing and whistleblower, distinguishing internal whistleblowing systems from human resources procedures.

Rationale for Whistleblowing: Significance of whistleblowing and protection against retaliation for organizational accountability and integrity. Risks associated with the lack of Internal Whistle Blowing Systems (IWS) on an organization's reputation and operations.

Addressing Sexual Harassment: Need for inclusive and gender-sensitive IWS, integrating sexual harassment policies into codes of conduct and compliance procedures. Highlighting Ethiopian Labor Proclamation definitions and prohibitions regarding sexual harassment at workplaces.

Whistleblowing Policy Components: Importance of reporting misconduct, protection against retaliation, and support for complainants. There is a necessity for clear, accessible, and regularly reviewed policies, ideally integrated into ethics and codes of conduct documents.

Main Components of Whistleblowing Policy: Reporting responsibility, protection against retaliation, clear reporting procedures, involvement of responsible bodies, acting in good faith, ensuring confidentiality, and handling reported violations.

Recommendations for Gender-Sensitive Media Policies: Hiring more female journalists, integrating gender awareness training in HR policies, and ensuring non-objectifying content and unbiased work assignments.

Gender Diversity and Media Inclusion: Importance of diversity and inclusion in media to mitigate bias and prejudice, acknowledging media's role in shaping gender perspectives. Existing gender inequalities in media content and the need for gender-aware policies to eliminate stereotypes and promote equal access.

Recommendations for Media Development Actors: Capacity building in gender training and policy development, appointing Gender Focal Persons, support in content diversification, digital journalism training, psychological support for journalists, and advocacy for an open media landscape.

DISCUSSION
SYNTHESIS

- Sexual Harassment and Gender-Related Content: Sexual harassment often relates more to human resources than content, but editors should discuss it in relation to gender-related content creation.

- Challenges in Hiring Women Journalists: Hiring women journalists, especially in editorial positions, poses significant challenges, often leading to continued harassment.

- Need for Separate Structures to Address Harassment: Advocacy for separate structures within media houses to handle sexual harassment cases effectively.

- Representation of Women in Media Leadership: Around 30% representation of women in top-level management and editorial positions needs improvement.

- Positive Examples and Mechanisms for Protection: ETV's experience safeguarding women journalists by establishing mechanisms for prompt action on issues like sexual harassment.

- Gender Attitudes and Biases in Assigning Content: A prevalent bias exists where women journalists are often limited to softer content, while men are assigned more politically severe content.

- Challenges Faced by Women Journalists: Challenges faced by women journalists include criticism and limited participation in content advocating gender issues.

- Need for Mandatory Mechanisms and Attitudinal Changes: Lack of mandatory mechanisms for gender-related content coverage, advocating attitudinal and behavioral shifts within the industry.

- Empowerment and Sensitivity among Editors: Empowering women editors and cultivating gender sensitivity among all editors are critical steps toward progress.

- Utilization of Women Experts and Training for Editors: Urgency in diversifying experts used in media and regular training for editors to enhance gender representation and content quality.

- Importance of Women Editors and Regular Evaluation: The presence of women editors correlates with better content variety; the need for regular evaluation of gender-sensitive content arises.

- Initiating Change through Education and Leadership: From defining gender to starting regular evaluations, advocating for education and strong leadership among editors.

- Encouragement and Support for Women Journalists: Encourage women journalists to engage in serious content creation and highlight their capabilities and potential.

- Changing Attitudes and Making Gender a Priority: Editors can influence, adjust, and prioritize gender issues within the media landscape.

- Collective Effort and Resilience Building: Emphasizing collaborative efforts to make journalism inclusive and resilient by taking small daily steps.

> "The fewer women journalists there are in the media house, the lower gender issues are incorporated in the contents. Empowering women editors to stay in the media and encouraging new and transitional journalists is a possible remedy.

> "Editors should have regular trainings so that they play their role in bringing changes in women representation in media and content production.

ACTIONABLE
TAKEAWAYS

Capacity Building and Support: Establish comprehensive Gender Training Manuals and facilitate training programs to enhance gender sensitivity among media professionals. Support the development of Gender-Sensitive Policies within media organizations to ensure a more inclusive and equitable work environment.

Diversification of Content: Provide support for diversifying content through initiatives such as field coverage scholarships, enabling a broader range of perspectives in media representation. Promote Gender-Issue-Focused Talk Shows or programs to address critical gender-related topics and amplify diverse voices within the media landscape.

Advocacy for an Open Media Landscape: Advocate for a more open and inclusive media landscape, fostering diverse viewpoints and ensuring equitable representation across all platforms.

Mandatory Frameworks for Gender-Related Content: Advocate for implementing mandatory frameworks within media outlets to ensure comprehensive coverage of gender-related content, paralleling existing frameworks for commercials or other content types.

Regular Evaluation of Gender-Sensitive Contents: Encourage editors to initiate mechanisms in their newsrooms to regularly evaluate gender-sensitive content, fostering accountability and continual improvement in representation and messaging.

Forum #5: Information Disorder in Ethiopia

- Date: September 07, 2023
- Speaker: Online Media Editor
  - Speaker's Background: An up-and-coming female editor in Ethiopia's emerging digital media frontier

PRESENTATION

- Topic: Information Disorder in Ethiopia: Declining Public Trust Amidst Rising False Content
- Key Highlights:

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING DECLINING TRUST IN MEDIA

The Media's inadequate coverage of public concerns, prioritizing propaganda over substantive issues, leads to public mistrust.

A substantial portion of the population spends significant daily time on digital media, with a high percentage encountering misinformation online.

Ethnic tensions, religious conflicts, crises like COVID-19 outbreaks and elections, increasing internet access, economic motives, and lower media literacy contribute to declining trust in media.

ON INFORMATION DISORDER

Information disorder encompasses misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation, posing significant challenges globally and regionally.

In Ethiopia, the convergence of ethnicity, politics, and religion intensifies the impact of information disorder, leading to a decline in public trust in the media.

Increased internet accessibility contributes to disseminating false information, often attributed to fake accounts posing as official sources, eroding trust in mainstream media.

Political polarization fuels disinformation, notably observed during conflicts like the Northern Ethiopia war, exacerbating tensions instead of facilitating resolution.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS INFORMATION DISORDER

Expand media literacy programs to enhance public awareness and critical thinking skills.

Advocate for transparency, accountability, and ethical journalism among governments, media entities, and journalists.

Implement fact-checking initiatives and collaborate with tech companies to combat false information.

To address and combat information disorder collaboratively, Foster continuous dialogue among major stakeholders, such as editors.

EDITORS' ROLE IN MITIGATING

INFORMATION DISORDER

Establish and adhere to stringent fact-checking standards, improving skills and employing relevant tools.

Critically assess press releases to ensure alignment with public interests rather than specific political agendas.

Validate journalists' evidence critically without undermining their efforts, bolstering public trust in the media industry.

DISCUSSION
SYNTHESIS

- Editorial Liability and Documentation: Editors face challenges in handling unintentional media content causing damages and seek strategies for documenting records to avoid prosecution.

- State Media Challenges: Editors at state media express difficulty in maintaining public trust due to limited room to reject government statements, potentially resulting in misleading information.

- Trust Erosion Factors: Failure to cover significant national incidents like ethnic and religious issues contributes to trust erosion within the public sphere.

- Information Disorder and Media Responsibility: Acknowledgment of information disorder prevalent in social media and mainstream media's call for collective action to counter harmful narratives.

- Political Instability and Media Impact: Political instability in Ethiopia is a significant driver of information disorder, impacting the media landscape.

- Role of Media in Political Context: Emphasis on exercising professionalism in journalism to positively influence the political and economic situation.

- Challenges and Opportunities of Information Disorder: Information disorder poses a significant threat but also an opportunity to enhance fact-checking capabilities.

- Barriers to Countering Information Disorder: Lack of access to information emerges as a significant challenge in combating misinformation.

- Media Literacy and Public Perception: Need for increased media literacy efforts and a change in public perception toward public media.

- Editorial Considerations: Emphasis on editors' considerations of timeliness, accuracy, and the importance of updated fact-checking skills.

- Digital Integration and Trust: Recognizing the dominance of digital platforms in public trust, emphasizing the need for effective integration by traditional media to counter information disorder.

- Advocacy and Legal Framework: Call for advocating the implementation of Access to Information laws and maintaining meticulous records to prevent prosecution.

- Ensuring Quality Reporting: Editors advocate for diversified sources, emphasizing tracing and crosschecking interviews and tips for accuracy.

- Relevance in AI Era: Timeliness and significance of the discussion, particularly with the development of AI, in shaping the future of media integrity.

> "As an editor working for state media, we mainly lose public trust as we have no room for rejecting government statements. We have to cover the statements as they are written; that means we have to lie when the government lies.

> "Information disorder is a major threat to the media and editors. But, it is also an opportunity for us so we can build our fact-checking capacity to the highest level.

ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

Nature and Impact Information Disorder: Information disorder, fueled by misinformation and political polarization, is a critical challenge affecting public trust in media, particularly intensified in Ethiopia due to ethnic, political, and religious intersections.

Challenges Faced: Editors encounter difficulties in handling unintentional content, maintaining trust within state media, covering critical incidents, and countering information disorder due to barriers like limited information access.

Editorial Role: Editors must enforce stringent fact-checking, assess information critically, validate evidence, and align content with public interests to enhance media credibility and trust.

Digital Integration and AI Impact: Recognizing the dominance of digital platforms and the relevance of AI, traditional media needs to effectively integrate digital tools by traditional media to counter information disorder and adapt to the evolving media landscape.

Recommended Strategies: Combatting information disorder requires expanding media literacy, advocating for transparent and ethical journalism, implementing robust fact-checking, fostering stakeholder collaboration, and empowering editors with enhanced fact-checking and critical assessment skills.

Forum #6: Media and Human Rights

- Date: September 14, 2023
- Speaker: Seasoned Media Editor
  - Speaker's Background: Media editor with extensive experience in news editing for print media and a current editorial role in a digital-first platform.

PRESENTATION

- Topic: Media and Human Rights: Role of Editors in the Protection of Human Rights
- Key Highlights:

DEFINING HUMAN RIGHTS

Human Rights are intrinsic to all individuals regardless of race, sex, nationality, or other conditions.

The Ethiopian Constitution endorses various rights, including life, liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, education, and health.

ROLE OF MEDIA HOUSES AND EDITORS IN HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION

Media houses and editors must exhibit determination and commitment as key gatekeepers in safeguarding human rights.

Editors should engage in investigative journalism to uncover and highlight complex human rights violations.

Upholding ethical journalism standards is crucial in addressing human rights violations by both government and other entities.

Media entities should actively expose violations and contribute to promoting the rule of law in Ethiopia.

Editors need to differentiate between human rights violations and political interests.

Media houses should resist third-party interference in their human rights coverage.

FREQUENTLY VIOLATED RIGHTS IN ETHIOPIA

Right to freedom of movement

Instances of xenophobia

Propagation of hate speech and misinformation targeting specific individuals, religious, or ethnic groups

Abduction of citizens for ransom

Prolonged detention of individuals without a fair trial

False accusations leading to extended detainment

DISCUSSION
SYNTHESIS

- The Role and Perception of Media: Differing perceptions between public/state-owned and private media roles. Limited coverage of HR violations in government-affiliated media due to concerns about inciting conflicts.

- Approaches to HR Reporting: Advocacy for conflict-sensitive approaches in addressing HR violations. Emphasis on HR framing of reporting for accountability, solutions, and consensus.

- Editorial Responsibilities: Importance of beat reporting, accuracy, and restructuring stories for independence. Call for editors to understand HR for their pivotal role clearly.

- Challenges in Media Engagement: Conflicts impact reporting on HR violations. Abuse of the rule of law affecting media's HR protection and coverage.

- Collaboration and Advocacy: Urgency in increasing awareness and coverage of HR violations. Proposals for collaborative engagement between EGE and HR organizations.

- Media Landscape and Advocacy Efforts: Decreased coverage of HR violations in Ethiopian media compared to the pre-reform period. Challenges faced by state media due to perceptions of betrayal in reporting HR violations.

- Advocacy and Enablement: Advocacy for categorizing freedom of expression under human rights. Emphasis on collective bargaining and constructive dialogue with the government.

- Professional Development: Advocacy for capacity building among reporters and editors for effective HR-framed reporting. Importance of solidarity among media houses for responsible reporting and advocacy.

> " We don't have to throw stones to one another. We should build strong coalitions and sit with the government to candidly and regularly discuss on these issues.

> " Unlike many countries in the world, the policy framework states the right to freedom of expression is a citizen right not a human right. Collective bargaining should aggressively be carried out to correct this playing field, and put the freedom of expression under a human rights category.

ACTIONABLE
TAKEAWAYS

Insufficient Media Coverage of HR Violations: HR violations in Ethiopia suffer from inadequate media attention and coverage.

Media's Lack of Independence: The media lacks complete independence and autonomy, impacting its reporting on HR violations.

Politicization of Human Rights Issues: Human rights matters have been politicized, affecting their unbiased portrayal in media.

Advocacy for Collaborative Efforts: Collaborative efforts are needed to ensure the thorough implementation of laws safeguarding human rights.

Crucial Role of Individual Commitment: Individual commitment is essential in addressing HR violations effectively.

Enhancing Technical Reporting Skills: Editors' technical reporting skills need enhancement, mainly through HR reporting training, to improve coverage quality.

EDITORS'
BREAKFAST FORUM

Forum #7: Livelihoods of Journalists

- Date: September 21, 2023
- Speaker: Broadcast Editor
  - Speaker's Background: Experienced and active editor from the public media platform

PRESENTATION

- Topic: Livelihoods of Journalists: Highlighting the Shift from Journalism to Better Paying Jobs
- Key Highlights:

SCARCITY OF EXPERIENCED JOURNALISTS AND EDITORS

A scarcity exists in media houses for aged and experienced journalists.

The market lacks qualified editors, leading to a profession primarily focused on young graduates.

Limited opportunities for young journalists to be mentored by trained professionals.

FACTORS LEADING TO LACK OF EXPERIENCED EDITORS

Media managers prefer less experienced personnel aligned with their interests, contributing to the absence of senior editors.

Systematic layoffs and preferences for new beginners over seasoned professionals.

Employers' inadequate care, low salaries, and failure to acknowledge experience and capacity.

Non-conducive workplace environments affect senior editors.

EDITORS AS CONTENT ENGINEERS AND MEDIA MANAGERS

Editors are pivotal as content developers and builders in the newsroom hierarchy.

They are integral brands representing their respective media houses and function as media managers.

PATHS EXPERIENCED

EDITORS TAKE

Transition into PR and communication roles across various sectors outside journalism.

Shift to different sectors like business or trade.

Reassignment to roles within media houses, often outside the newsroom or retirement.

IMPACT OF THE ABSENCE

OF EXPERIENCED EDITORS

Decreased number of qualified editors, leading to a decline in content quality.

Loss of knowledge transfer and skill development between generations, contributing to immature journalism.Proposed Solutions:

Respect the newsroom's internal structure, emphasizing experience and skill.

Media managers should possess journalistic experience and receive leadership training.

Implementation of regulations in hiring/appointing editors and managers by media houses.

Creation of conducive workplaces to retain experienced editors.

Collaboration between government and media stakeholders to enhance the leadership capacity of media houses.

DISCUSSION
SYNTHESIS

- Relevance and Timeliness: Acknowledgment of the topic's timeliness and relevance within the media landscape.
- Journalists' Livelihood and Press Freedom: Recognition of journalists' livelihoods as integral to press freedom and journalists' safety. Importance of support and solidarity among editors during challenging times, including protection of rights and advocacy.
- Challenges and Frustrations in the Sector: Blurring of professional integrity within society and the media sector. Frustration among journalists due to the perceived lack of press freedom resulted in attrition from the industry. Concerns regarding ownership affiliations affect satisfaction and press freedom.
- Encouraging Features and Sector Development: Recognition of promoting aspects within the sector, including the potential return of professionals and their contribution through alternative media platforms. Emphasis on commitment to associations and the need for solidarity among editors.
- Challenges in Journalists' Well-being and Qualifications: Concerns about the well-being of journalists, including comparisons between current and past editors' qualifications. Highlighting the

necessity for passion and determination in journalism despite challenges.
- Effect of Leadership Changes and Regulatory Frameworks: Impact of leadership changes within media organizations on progress and editorial decisions. Advocacy for merit-based promotions and the need for regulatory frameworks supporting journalists' livelihoods.
- Role and Collaboration of Editors: Recognition of editors as pivotal figures for change within the media sector. The desire for collaboration with the Ethiopian Media Council and the importance of editors' active participation in regulatory developments.
- Advocacy for Media Independence: Advocacy for fair distribution of commercials, avoidance of incentives compromising professional integrity, and advocacy for public media's focus on shared interests.
- Call for Institutional Stability and Advocacy against Partisan Appointments: Need for institutional stability within public media and a collective challenge against partisan appointments in media-related authorities.

> Failure to maintain independent editorial decision-making power and safety of journalists are major causes that drive editors away.

> Owners sometimes become affiliated with the government or other third parties, resulting in a lack of job satisfaction for editors.

ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

Regulatory Governance in Media Hiring: Advocacy for mandatory regulations governing the hiring and appointment processes of editors and media managers within media houses.

Capacity Building for Media Leadership: Emphasis on the need for collaborative efforts between government and media stakeholders to enhance the leadership capacity within media houses.

Empowerment through Governing Codes: Advocacy for establishing governing codes and standards to empower journalists' livelihoods within the media industry.

Forum #8: Media Polarization

- Date: October 05, 2023
- Speaker: Online Editor
  - Speaker's Background: Editor of Online media outlet of a big public media institution

PRESENTATION

- Topic: Media Polarization: How does editorial policy counteract polarization in the news media?
- Key Highlights:

Media coverage ranges from avoidance to glorification based on differing perspectives.
Divisions and Reasons for National Dialogue Commission:
Ethiopia's division is due to ethnicity and language.
Political differences are driven by emotions and harmful narratives instead of factual incidents.
The National Dialogue Commission was established due to accumulated political differences, lack of consensus, and harmful societal narratives.

MEDIA'S REFLECTION OF POLITICAL ECONOMY AND CONFLICTS

The direct influence of the political economy on media coverage of national conflicts.

Media's contribution to fueling differences and polarization based on societal narratives.

The significant role of media in inciting conflicts regarding politics, ethnicity, and religion.

CATEGORIZATION AND CHALLENGES WITHIN MEDIA

The transition from a dual to a quadruple categorization of media reflects varied allegiances.

Challenges include biased reporting, lack of national framework among regional media, and journalists' personal biases reflected in reporting.

Media's absorption in political, ethnic, and religious differences hampers professionalism.

IMPACTS OF MEDIA POLARIZATION

Adverse effects on nation-building processes.

Media's role in inciting ethnic and religious conflicts, hindering informed decision-making.

Financial challenges and ethical concerns contribute to polarization, undermining truth and morality.

IMPROVEMENT IN POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

Need for an improved political landscape to facilitate the media's influential role.

Emphasis on resolving political differences through dialogues.

ETHICAL STANDARDS AND MEDIA GOVERNANCE

Call for editors to uphold ethical journalism standards.

Engagement platforms like EGE collectively advocate for media interests and self-regulation.

Focus on capacity development for journalists and effective governance frameworks for media houses.

DISCUSSION
SYNTHESIS

- Media Influence and Responsibility: Media should lead the political narrative rather than be swayed by it. A conducive environment with maintained media freedom is crucial for driving politics. Solidarity is essential in advocating for media freedom to reduce polarization.

- Public Interest and Advocacy: Media commitment should focus on setting public interest agendas. Media entities, including associations like EMC, should advocate for media freedom to influence political landscapes positively.

- Countering Interference and Building Trust: By advocating ethical standards, editors should counter third-party interference. Establishing structures within media houses to monitor public opinions and grievances is vital for covering public interest issues and restoring public trust.

- Role of Ethic-Based Media and Capacity Building: Encouraging ethnic-based media should be paired with effectively monitoring their operations. Capacity-building initiatives should equip editors to tackle challenges through ethical and technical excellence.

- Balancing Media Voices and Addressing Polarization: Balancing voices in stories and monitoring establishments promoting ethnic values is crucial. Countering media polarization, particularly in social media, necessitates collective action and ethical professionalism.

- Editorial Power and Professional Collaboration: Editors wield significant power in shaping stories and must maintain ethical standards. Collaboration within editor associations is essential for a free media environment.

- Engagement in National Goals and Media Literacy: Active engagement of editors is critical for national goals like dialogue and transitional justice. Enhancing media literacy levels among the public is vital for improving perceptions across sectors.

- Commitment to Professional Standards: Editors' commitment to maintaining professional standards is essential for improving the media landscape.

> "The media shouldn't be swayed by the country's political situation; it should actively influence and drive political discussions.

> "Editors ought to dedicate effort to ensuring a balanced portrayal of diverse voices within stories.

ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

Regulation of Ethnic-Based Media: Emphasize robust monitoring and regulation of the establishment and functioning of ethnic-based media within Ethiopia.

Promotion of Professionalism: Editors should prioritize and actively work towards upholding professionalism standards within the media industry.

Emphasis on Self-Regulation: Encourage and underscore the importance of effective self-regulation mechanisms within the media sector.

Improvement in Media Literacy: Highlight the need for enhanced media literacy levels among the general population to improve perceptions and understanding.

Media Engagement in National Dialogue: Stress the necessity for active media involvement in all facets of the national dialogue, urging effective promotion of this engagement by entities like the Editors Guild (EGE).

Forum #9: Upholding Professional Standards

- Date: October 12, 2023
- Speaker: Active News Editor
  - Speaker's Background: New editor serving one of the most prominent media establishments in Ethiopia

PRESENTATION

- Topic: Upholding Professional Standards: Role of editors in ensuring stringent adherence to journalistic ethics and codes
- Key Highlights:

CREATING A CONDUCIVE ENVIRONMENT

Promoting teamwork and fostering collaborative work environments.

Fair and equal distribution of assignments among reporters.

Embracing a gender-sensitive leadership approach.

Ensuring the safety and protection of journalists.

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS AND CODES

Regular reminders and updates on ethical standards within the newsroom.

Sensitizing the editorial policy of media houses.

Close monitoring to prevent journalists from receiving incentives from third parties.

Avoidance of conflicts of interest in newsroom operations.

Regularly evaluate reporters based on fair, balanced, factual, and public interest reporting codes.

Inclusive framing of news coverage (considering disability, gender, etc.).

Equipping reporters with conflict-sensitive reporting skills.

Enabling impartial reporting regardless of personal political, religious, or ethnic views.

EXTERNAL CHALLENGES

Political influence from the state.

Lack of economic independence for media houses.

Journalists' poor livelihoods.

Internal conspiracies and trends of group formation within newsrooms.

Instances of censorship and self-censorship.

Editors' challenges such as communication skills, poor planning, and favoritism.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Advocacy for a free media landscape and more robust efforts to maintain media freedom.

Creating a conducive workplace for editors' free operation.

Decentralization of managerial responsibilities.

Appointment of editors based solely on qualifications and experience.

EXPECTATIONS
FROM EDITORS

Continuous focus on capacity building and staying updated.

Cultivating solid and standard relationships with all newsroom staff.

Openness to criticism and chaotic routines.

Prioritizing the framing of works around public interest issues.

DISCUSSION
SYNTHESIS

Transportation Payments Issue:

- Due to economic constraints, conflicting views exist regarding journalists accepting transportation payments from media houses or third parties.
- Consideration for research to understand its implications and recommend possible actions.

Pressure on Editors and Conflict Resolution Skills:

- Editors face government and media owner pressure, a critical issue needing resolution.
- Emphasize the importance of editors possessing conflict resolution skills to manage competing interests.

Impact on Journalists' Image and Media Literacy:

- Challenges contributing to a negative image of journalists require efforts from institutions like EGE to enhance media literacy.
- Address sexual harassment issues women journalists face and the need for editors to counter such challenges.

Role of Editors and Policy Frameworks:

- Focus of editors on ensuring factual and unbiased reporting, acknowledging the absence of control mechanisms for incentives provided to reporters.
- Proposal to research the issue of accepting incentives about policy frameworks and advocating for collective participation of journalists in this study.

Professionalism and Counteracting External Influences:

- Stress on editors' role in countering external influences by owners and managers, emphasizing professionalism as the remedy.
- Recognition of the widespread practice of providing incentives globally, suggesting research by EGE to develop policy material based on findings.

Unprofessional Practices:

- Highlight the unprofessional nature of individuals falsely claiming to represent media houses for transportation incentives and the need to discourage such actions.

"

While not endorsing incentive acceptance, it's incorrect to label it as corruption. Institutional corruption by media houses in commercial and sponsorship endeavors exists separately.

"

Analysis of trends indicates no evident bias in journalists' reporting linked to third-party transportation payments, making labeling this as corruption challenging.

ACTIONABLE
TAKEAWAYS

Building Media Literacy through Collaborative Discussions: EGE should organize and moderate discussions with private sector and government representatives to address media literacy concerns. Collaboration among these stakeholders can enhance awareness and understanding within the industry.

Research on Incentive Practices for Policy Development: EGE should initiate comprehensive research on incentive practices prevalent in various countries. The findings could serve as the foundation for developing a policy framework addressing providing incentives to reporters.

Addressing Livelihood Challenges for Journalists and Media Houses: Implement aggressive interventions to alleviate the economic dependency of media houses and improve journalists' livelihoods. Initiatives focusing on financial stability and support could significantly impact the industry's sustainability.

Regular Capacity Development for Editors: Ensure consistent and periodic capacity development programs for editors. Sessions like the current one should be conducted regularly, providing editors with updated skills and knowledge essential for effective newsroom leadership.

Forum #10: Media Convergence: Legacy Vs Digital

- Date: November 02, 2023
- Speaker: Media Editor
  - Speaker's Background: Experienced news editor at a public media institution

PRESENTATION

- Topic: Legacy Vs. Digital: How is digital media overtaking the traditional in Ethiopia?
- Key Presentation Highlights:

DEFINING LEGACY AND DIGITAL MEDIA

Panelists clarified definitions of legacy and digital media

CHALLENGES OF DIGITAL MEDIA

Information disorder.

Manipulated content.

Lack of professionalism and originality.

Credibility issues

ADVANTAGES OF LEGACY MEDIA

Accountability.

Better audience information and education.

Provision of well-balanced facts.

ADVANTAGES OF DIGITAL MEDIA

Time and cost efficiency.

Enhanced accessibility.

Improved delivery of audible messages.

Enhanced audience interaction and communication.

Audience preference for digital platforms.

Formation of a digital society.

CHALLENGES OF LEGACY MEDIA

Slower content transmission.

Less audience engagement compared to digital media.

Higher costs.

IMPACT OF DIGITAL
MEDIA ON LEGACY MEDIA

Preference for faster digital dissemination by the audience.

Conversion or closure of traditional media houses.

Shift in Ethiopia's media oligopoly ecosystem.

Migration of content consumers to digital platforms.

Increased competition for attention.

Emergence of consumers as content creators.

Rise of citizen journalism.

Difficulty in distinguishing professional journalists from others.

Integration of digital platforms by traditional media.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Uphold professionalism and quality journalism in traditional media.

Provide tax incentives to bolster economic capacity.

Promote copyright regulations.

Campaign for media literacy.

Implement moderation mechanisms for digital content.

Enforce fact-checking measures.

DISCUSSION
SYNTHESIS

Challenges in Digital Integration and Transition:

- Print Media Transition: Struggles with digital integration to meet audience demands beyond weekly issues.
- Cost of Printing: Escalating expenses requires government intervention and negotiation strategies.
- Content Plagiarism: Original stories face alteration and dissemination within the digital community.

Professionalism and Ethical Concerns

- Maintaining Professionalism: Emphasizing the importance of upholding professional standards in the digital realm.
- Sensationalism: Caution against sensationalizing stories in pursuit of engagement.

Accessibility and Media Platforms

- Limited Internet Access: Highlighting radio as the most accessible medium for the majority without internet access.
- Fact-Checking on Social Media: Challenges in moderating and fact-checking content on platforms like YouTube and Facebook.

Insights into Digital Transformation

- Difficulty in Digital Integration: Difficulty transitioning radio content to digital-friendly formats due to skill and time constraints.
- Audience Insights: Acknowledgment of digital platforms aiding in mapping audience demographics and collecting insights.
- Media Literacy Campaigns: Importance of empowering media literacy to foster a responsible, informed citizenry.

Future Directions for Traditional Media

- Digital Integration Focus: Emphasizing the need for traditional media to prioritize digital integration given the limited internet access.
- Fact-Checking Initiatives: Advocating for establishing in-house fact-checking departments within traditional media.
- Content Depth and Insight: Leveraging the strength of traditional media by producing insightful, in-depth stories to compete effectively against social media.

"

Emphasizing the need for traditional media to prioritize digital integration given the limited internet access.

"

Leveraging the strength of traditional media by producing insightful, in-depth stories to compete effectively against social media."

ACTIONABLE
TAKEAWAYS

Bridge the Skill Gap: Invest in training to enhance digital platform utilization within traditional media.

Strengthen Collective Bargaining: Pursue negotiations for incentives and revenue with public advertisers to sustain traditional media.

Prioritize Fact-Checking: Allocate resources and focus on rigorous fact-checking practices.

Resolve Copyright Concerns: Address copyright issues to safeguard the integrity of original content creators.

Promote Quality Journalism: Foster a culture of better and high-quality journalism as a priority within media practices.

EDITORS'
BREAKFAST FORUM

Forum #11: Media and Climate Change Communication

- Date: November 09, 2023
- Speaker: Senior Editor
  - Speaker's Background: Seasoned news editor at a local print media establishment

PRESENTATION

- Topic: The Role of Media in Climate Change Communication: Why should editors care?
- Key Highlights:

CLIMATE CHANGE FACTS

Climate Change Trends: Panelist discussed current climate change trends and their global impacts.

Disproportionate Burden on Third World Countries: Emphasized how countries like Ethiopia face heavier burdens due to limited crisis management capacity.

MEDIA'S ROLE IN CLIMATE COMMUNICATION

Survival Imperative: Highlighted climate change as crucial for the planet's survival.

Shift in Media Focus: Advocated for a shift from crisis coverage to preventive interventions in climate reporting.

Capacity Building for Advocacy: Urged media and journalists to enhance their capacity for effective climate advocacy.

CHALLENGES IN ETHIOPIAN MEDIA'S CLIMATE COVERAGE

Lack of Cross-cutting Coverage: Attributes lack of climate coverage to disinterest when marketing products, editors' limited awareness, and restricted access to climate-related information.

EDITORIAL
REMEDIES

Editor Awareness and Framing: Editors are urged to increase awareness and frame content in climate communications.

Establishment of Dedicated Climate Coverage: Suggested dedicated teams and platforms for regular climate change coverage.

STAKEHOLDER
ACTIONS

Training Initiatives: Proposed rigorous climate reporting training for media personnel.

Support for Professional Associations: Advocated support for associations specializing in climate reporting within the media sector.

DISCUSSION
SYNTHESIS

Continuous Coverage Challenges

- Despite initial engagement, the struggle lies in maintaining sustained media coverage of climate issues.
- Integrating climate elements into diverse topics like health and politics could ensure continual focus.

Media Attention Deficiency:

- There's a significant lack of necessary attention to climate change from media outlets.
- The direct link between climate issues and societal well-being often gets overlooked.

Storytelling for Impact:

- Emphasis on human interest stories can potentially convey messages and instigate desired societal change.
- Unlike the coverage of natural disasters, factual reporting on famine impacts lacks commitment.

Editorial Responsibilities:

- Editors' awareness of and sensitivity towards environmental regulations are crucial for relevant content creation.
- Understanding climate facts becomes imperative as it's a national concern.

Training and Reporting Evolution:

- Regular climate reporting training coupled with understanding ground realities is pivotal for journalists.
- Over the past two decades, declining media attention to climate issues has been noticeable due to shifting relationships between media and authorities.

Media Dynamics:

- Public media tends to prioritize climate issues more than the private sector.
- Despite widespread drought and floods leading to fatalities, media focus remains confined to urban areas, indicating the need for commitment to cover remote regions.

Self-Accountability:

- Acknowledging failures in climate reporting is essential, shifting the onus from external factors to internal commitment.
- Associations like EGE can contribute significantly through research to identify problems and propose solutions.

Capacity Building:

- Editors' capacity building requires heightened attention and investment for better climate-related editorial decisions and coverage.

> The media has not given the required attention to climate change. We forget the fact that the issue if directly related to the well-being of societies. We must focus on human interest stories that convey messages and bring desired change in the public and the leadership approaches.

> At this specific moment, there are people dying from drought and floods in many parts of the country. However, we can see how the media is ignoring these contents by confining itself in Addis Ababa. We have to be committed to visiting remote areas and spreading the incidents to the general public.

ACTIONABLE
TAKEAWAYS

Rigorous Training Initiatives: Implement comprehensive and ongoing training programs for media professionals focused on climate reporting and staying updated with relevant information.

Support for Professional Associations: Support professional media associations dedicated to enhancing climate reporting standards and practices.

Research Focus: Initiate research endeavors investigating the role of media in shaping perceptions and actions concerning climate change, fostering a deeper understanding of its impact.

Editorial Advocacy for Information Access: Encourage collaborative efforts among editors to advocate for and promote free access to information pertinent to climate reporting, ensuring transparency and broad coverage.

Forum #12: Safety of Journalists

- Date: November 16, 2023
- Speaker: Media Development Expert
  - Speaker's Background: Print media editor cum media development consultant

PRESENTATION

- Topic: Safety of Journalists: Editors' Role in Protection of Journalists and Media Houses in Ethiopia
- Key Highlights:

SAFETY CHALLENGES IN ETHIOPIAN JOURNALISM

Despite over 40 years of independent journalism, safety remains a grave concern.

Ensuring safety for reporters, editors, and media managers is an ongoing struggle.

Persistent intimidation, attacks, and prosecution against journalists persist.

ROLE OF EDITORS IN JOURNALISTS' SAFETY

Act as gatekeepers fostering a safety-centric culture within newsrooms.

Establish protocols to mitigate risks and protect journalists.

Navigate and respond to various threats faced by journalists.

Advocate for journalists' safety within media organizations and the wider community.

Provide ethical guidance to mitigate risks indirectly and offer moral support.

TYPES OF A TTACKS FACED

Physical Threats: Intimidation, unlawful detention, assault, theft during duty.

Digital Threats: Cyberbullying, labeling, intimidation, and hacking via social media and digital platforms.

STRATEGIES FOR
ENSURING SAFETY

Implement safety protocols across mission phases.

Establish collaborative risk assessment mechanisms.

Properly manage staff and freelancers.

Cultivate a safety culture and advocacy efforts.

Conduct risk assessment matrices and formulate risk mitigation plans.

IMPORTANCE OF
COLLECTIVE ACTION

Editors advocate for collaboration between media houses, government bodies, and international organizations.

Promote solidarity within the journalistic community for mutual support and protection.

Encourage a network where journalists watch out for each other's safety.

Spearheaded initiatives for joint safety training and emergency response plans.

Use platforms to advocate for collective protection and rally support from within and external stakeholders.

DISCUSSION
SYNTHESIS

Collective Advocacy Gap

- The absence of collective action poses a significant gap in safeguarding journalists' safety and security.
- Lack of solidarity among media houses hinders effective advocacy on cross-cutting issues.

Media Structures and Advocacy:

- Ownership status (commercial, community, online, broadcast) might influence media houses' ability to unite for advocacy.
- Platforms like EGE can facilitate national-level advocacy collaboration between gatekeepers and media owners.

Monitoring and Solidarity:

- Vigilant incident monitoring is pivotal for fostering collective action.
- Attitudinal barriers hinder advocacy efforts for journalist safety, often politicized by the government.

Empowering Media Landscape:

- Media professionals acknowledge their role in disseminating robust information and advocate intensively to enhance media safety.
- Newsrooms lack safety protocols for field assignments, amplifying risks.

Regulation vs. Reality:

- Despite existing regulations in Ethiopia, implementation falls short, necessitating collective advocacy for adherence.

Specific Challenges Faced:

- Challenges faced by journalists, especially during emergencies, underscore the need for comprehensive safety measures.

- Women journalists encounter not just unsafe environments but also sexual harassment, requiring immediate attention.

Editorial Responsibilities:

- Editors' responsibilities towards journalists' safety are highlighted through examples of both success and failure.
- A call for standardized guidelines across all media houses is advocated.

Urgency for Collective Action:

- Addressing the absence of structured safety plans to combat self-censorship.
- Push for media houses to engage in internal reflections before undertaking collective actions.

Associations and Advocacy:

- Calls for robust advocacy efforts by associations like EGE and continuous bargaining to protect journalists' rights.
- Emphasizes the need to avoid neglecting journalists in prolonged imprisonment.

Editorial Capacity and Readiness:

- Editors' readiness and capacity were questioned, urging a shift from symbolic roles toward active safeguarding.

Media House Responsibilities:

- Media houses urged to prioritize safety over other concerns and equip themselves with protective tools and strategies.

Role of Associations:

- Associations should ensure the implementation of safety protocols in media houses.

"
Most of the threats come from the state. We have hardly anybody that has the endurance to advocate for the right of a jailed journalist when imprisoned for longer time

"
The editors should be challenged first. The capacity and readiness of editors (starting from their promotion to the position) should be questioned whether they are not symbolic

ACTIONABLE
TAKEAWAYS

Establish Collective Advocacy:

Form alliances among media houses and industry bodies for advocacy in journalist safety.

Create platforms like EGE to facilitate collaboration between gatekeepers and media owners.

Enhance Monitoring and Solidarity:

Implement robust incident monitoring systems to enable swift collective action.

Foster solidarity among journalists and media houses to address safety concerns.

Editorial Responsibility and Capacity Building:

Prioritize safety protocols within newsrooms while assigning journalists to risky areas.

Challenge and enhance the readiness and capacity of editors to safeguard journalists actively.

Empower Media Houses:

Equip media houses with standardized safety guidelines and necessary protection tools.

Ensure media houses have well-structured safety protocols and mitigation strategies in place.

Advocacy and Endurance:

Strengthen continuous advocacy efforts, especially for journalists facing prolonged imprisonment.

Address the predominant threats from the state through persistent and enduring support structures.

Leadership and Internal Reflection:

Question the capacity and determination of media house leadership.

Encourage candid discussions within newsrooms and foster internal reflections to drive collective actions for journalist safety.

Forum #13: Media and Gender

- Date: December 07, 2023
- Speaker: Media Researcher and gender expert
  - Speaker's Background: Former media editor, media development officer, and Gender expert in the context of media

PRESENTATION

- Topic: Media and Gender: Editors' Perspectives during Decision Making of Contents on Gender-Based Violence in Ethiopia

Organized by EGE, in collaboration with IMS and UNWOMEN – in commemoration of the 16 days of activism against GBV - 2023

- Key Highlights:

DEFINING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)	CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS	TYPES OF GBV IN ETHIOPIA
Any act causing physical, sexual, or psychological harm to women, encompassing threats, coercion, or deprivation of liberty. Recognized legal frameworks (CEDAW, Ethiopian Constitution) affirming gender equality and safeguarding against discrimination.	Ethiopian constitutional provisions outlining affirmative action, maternity rights, and consultation in national policies. Statistics from EDHS 2016 highlight early motherhood among adolescent girls.	Various forms include intimate partner violence, sexual assault, harassment, forced and early marriage, abduction, online violence, systemic denial of access, and media space exclusion.

EDITORS'
BREAKFAST FORUM

GENDER IN
ETHIOPIAN MEDIA

Urging media to view GBV not just as news but as a societal issue.

Encouraging responsible, fair reporting to change public perception and ensure accountability.

Avoid sensationalism, passive voice, and limited coverage of apprehension and punishment of perpetrators.

EDITORIAL
RESPONSIBILITIES

Showcasing Ros Atkins' 50:50 Project as a model experience.

Encouraging fair representation, cooperative efforts with NGOs, inclusion of helplines, specialized journalism education, and gender-sensitive editorial policies.

Proposing self-regulation, journalism focusing on solutions, investigative reporting, and campaigns to end violence against women.

ROLES OF MEDIA IN
ADDRESSING GBV

Emphasizing media's influence in shaping societal views and informing policy through comprehensive reporting, data recall, and expert insights.

Acknowledging the media's responsibility in reinforcing stereotypes and advocating for a more holistic representation of women.

PERSPECTIVES FOR
EDITORIAL DECISION-MAKING

GBV in conflict settings, intimate partner/domestic violence, cybercrimes, economic empowerment, protection for victims, perpetrator accountability, and the impact on families.

DISCUSSION
SYNTHESIS

- GBV Neglect: Media houses in Ethiopia have historically marginalized Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in their content production, neglecting its significance and impact.
- Challenges in Coverage: Traditional practices tied to GBV pose challenges for editors and media managers, hindering comprehensive coverage of media content.
- Efforts for Change: Urgent efforts are necessary to bring attention to GBV through media coverage, aiming for attitudinal shifts and increased awareness.
- Enhancing Representation: Improved representation of women in media is vital, necessitating their inclusion across all programs and media platforms.
- Marital Rape: Marital rape, a common occurrence in Ethiopia, remains unaddressed legally and needs advocacy for criminalization.
- Roles Beyond Editors: Addressing GBV coverage extends beyond editors; media managers and advertisers play pivotal roles in facilitating attitude shifts.
- Affirmative Action Clarification: Affirmative action in Ethiopia aims to ensure equal rights rather than perpetuate gender bias, aligning with global initiatives.
- Financial Implications: Private media's limited attention to GBV coverage is linked to lower revenue and challenges in content marketability.
- Legal Amendments: Advocacy is required for legal amendments, including redefining marriage in the family law and criminalizing marital rape.
- Purpose of Affirmative Action: Affirmative action aims

to secure equal rights across social, political, and economic spheres, not to denote women's inequality.
- Timeframe for Change: While attitudinal shifts are necessary, achieving the intended level of change may take a considerable period.
- Equal Treatment in Media: Commitment from media houses can bridge the gap between coverage of women's and men's issues, ensuring equitable representation.
- Editorial Perspectives: Editors must reframe their perspectives on GBV to drive substantial changes within media narratives.
- Policy Analysis: Media should conduct thorough policy analyses on gender-related issues, enhancing understanding and informed coverage.
- Consumer Interests: Balancing the interests of female consumers with media objectives presents a significant challenge, requiring strategic alignment.
- Inclusivity in Action: Women's leadership and strategic organization, inclusive of men, are essential for effecting positive change.
- Assigning Male Journalists: Initiatives involving male journalists continuously covering women's issues can diversify perspectives and deepen coverage.
- Embracing Challenges: Editors attending conferences should accept challenges and adapt models presented, like the Ros Atkin model, for impactful change.
- Capacity Building Support: Supporting media houses in capacity building for gender issue coverage is crucial for sustained progress and comprehensive representation.

> Affirmative action is not a provision for women as they are not equal to men; rather to ensure their equal rights in all social, political and economic fabrics.

> One of the major problems for private media to give less attention to GBV coverage is the lower revenue and least marketability of the contents.

ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

Prioritize Comprehensive Coverage: Media houses must prioritize comprehensive coverage of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and women's issues across all programs, aiming for attitudinal change and increased awareness.

Enhance Representation: Improve the representation of women in media content and editorial roles to ensure diverse perspectives and inclusivity.

Advocate Legal Amendments: Advocate for legal amendments criminalizing marital rape and refining the definition of marriage in family law to protect women's rights.

Address Financial Challenges: Address the financial challenges media outlets face, particularly in revenue and marketability, to encourage greater attention to GBV coverage.

Support Capacity Building: Support media houses in capacity building to cover gender issues effectively, collaborating with organizations like UNWOMEN for guidance and resources.

Continuous Dialogues: Regularly engage in dialogues and sessions focusing on gender and GBV issues, fostering collaboration and sustained efforts within the media community.

Initiate Change: Take proactive steps as editors and media managers to challenge biases, assign journalists strategically, and implement models for improved coverage of women's issues, following successful examples like the Ros Atkin model.

Collaborate for Impact: Collaborate with organizations like UNWOMEN and EGE to leverage collective efforts and resources toward advancing gender equality through media representation and coverage.
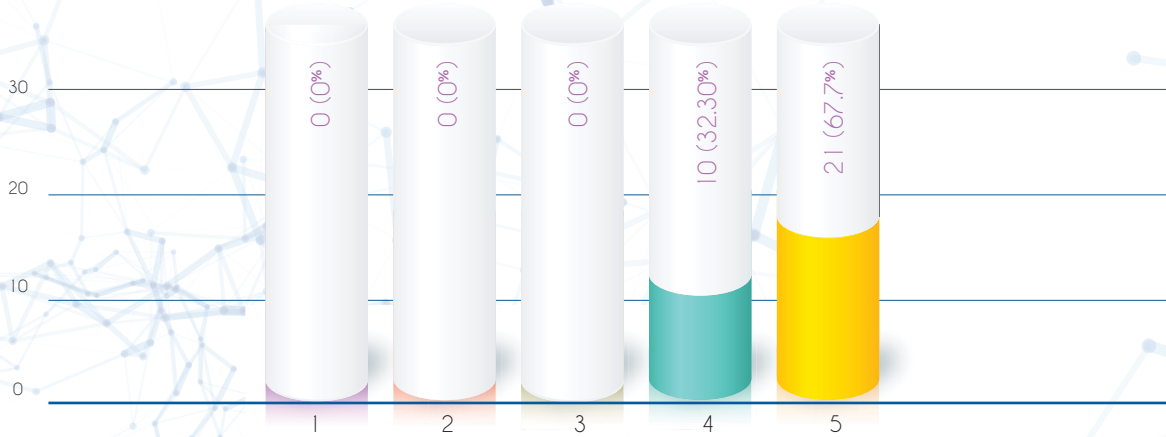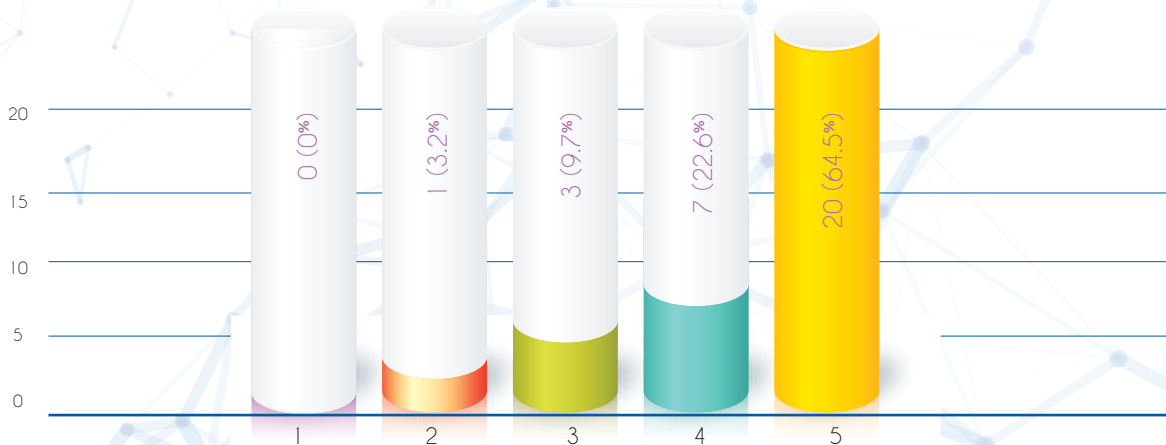
SURVEY FEEDBACK

Overall Feedback:

■ Sessions: Participants rated the sessions highly, with a majority expressing satisfaction.

Were you satisfied with the session?
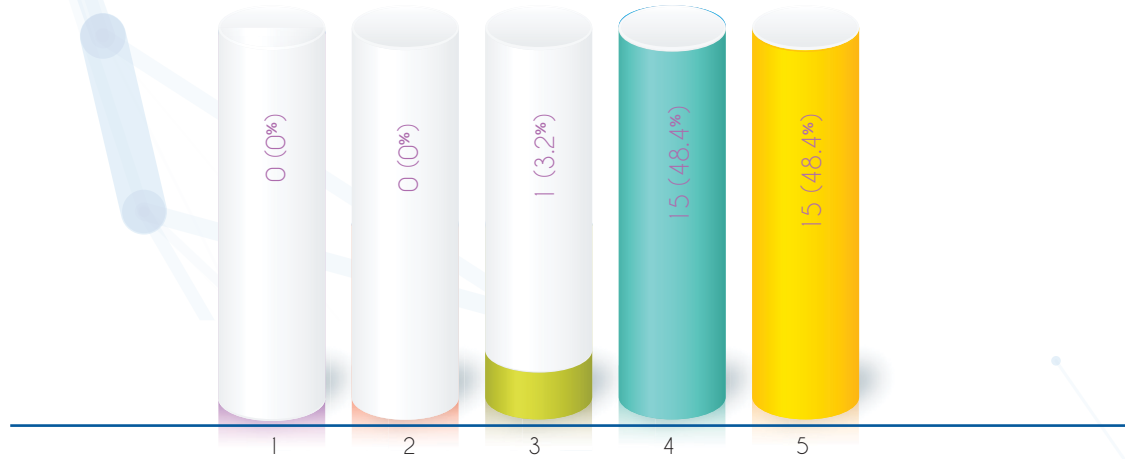31 responses

Venue and Amenities: Positive feedback was received for the hotel, breakfast, and location.

How happy were you with the hotel, breakfast and location?
31 responses

Timing: Responses indicated favorable opinions regarding the date and time of the breakfast sessions.

How convenient was the date and time of the breakfast session?
31 responses

| 1	2	3	4	5
0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.2%)	15 (48.4%)	15 (48.4%)

Topics: Generally positive satisfaction levels with the breadth and depth of the topics covered.

How satisfied were you with the topics of discussion?
31 responses

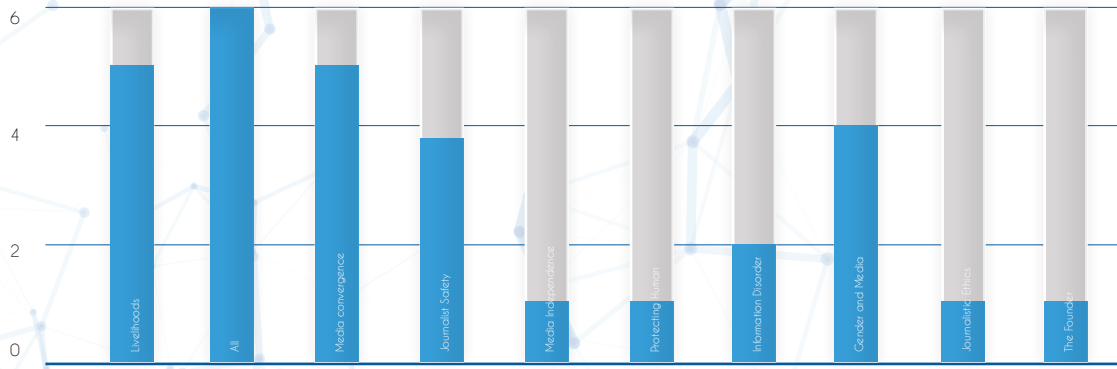| 1	2	3	4	5
0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.2%)	15 (48.4%)	15 (48.4%)
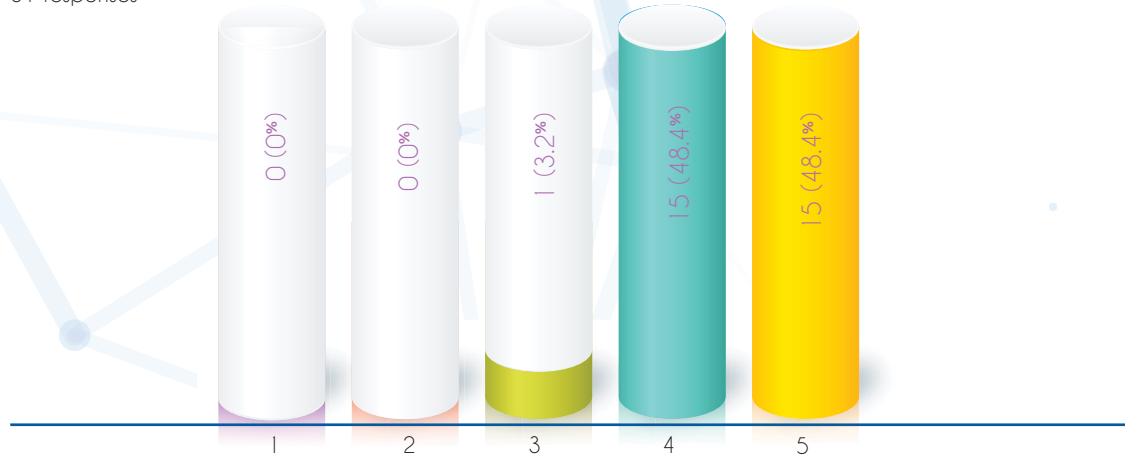
Relevance: Participants perceived the sessions as highly relevant and helpful for the media industry in Ethiopia.

How relevant and helpful do you think it was for the media industry in Ethiopia?
31 responses

1	2	3	4	5
0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	9 (29%)	22 (71%)
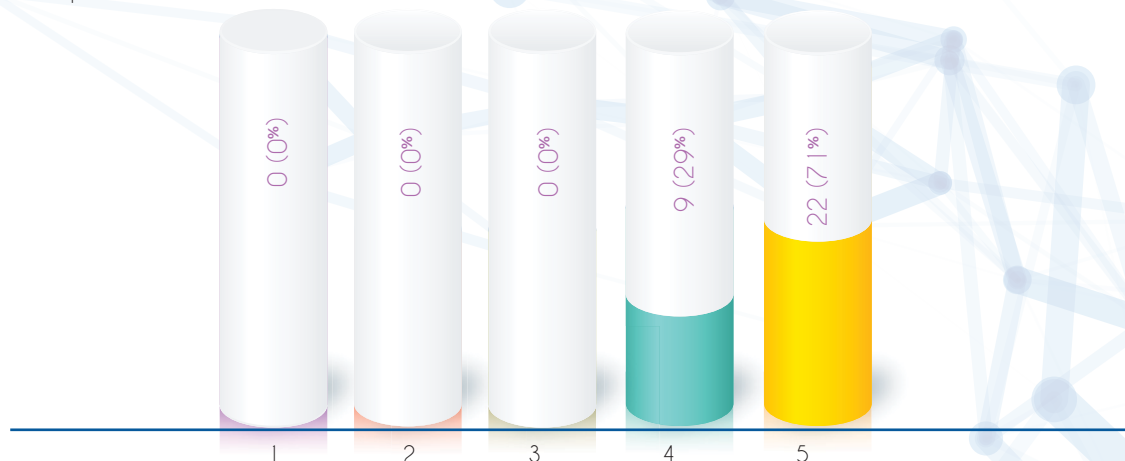
Key Insights:
Favorite Sessions: Identified preferences for specific sessions were noted.

Which session was your favorite?

Bar chart with sessions labeled: Livelihoods, All, Media convergence, Journalist Safety, Media Independence, Protecting Pluralism, Information Disorder, Gender and Media, Journalistic Ethics, The Founding

Relevance of Invited Guests: Generally positive feedback regarding the relevance of guest attendance.

How relevant do you think attendance of invited guests were?
31 responses
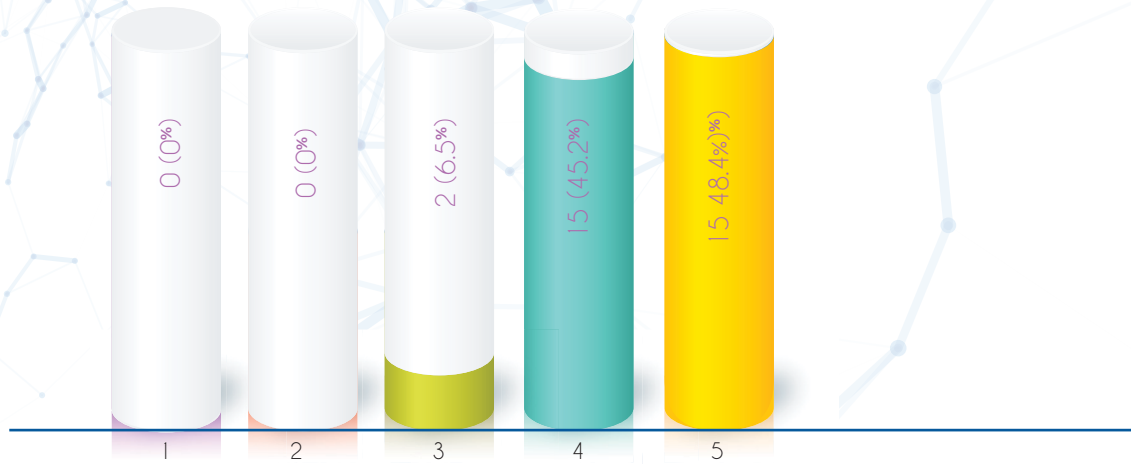
1	2	3	4	5
0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (6.5%)	15 (45.2%)	15 (48.4%)%)

Major Takeaway: Varied takeaways were highlighted by participants, reflecting diverse perspectives.

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KEY TAKEAWAYS	
	Solidarity among editors
	Safe space for discussions on sensitive matters
	Continued collaboration and collective action
	Role of media editors in protecting public interest
	Shared goals across public and private media
	Knowledge enhancement and ethical journalism practices
	Networking for future collaborations
	Emphasis on professional development
	Forum for industry advancement
	Understanding audience needs and content versatility
	Learning from discussions and gaining new perspectives
	Capacity development for media professionals
	Importance of industry-wide collaboration
	The leadership role of editors in advancing the profession

Recommendations:
Suggestions for the Future: Various suggestions were provided for enhancing future iterations, potentially focusing on specific aspects or topics.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
	Enhance editor participation and diversity.
	Maintain regular sector-focused discussions.
	Address pressing issues promptly.
	Introduce diverse capacity-building sessions.
	Invite varied speakers, including government reps.
	Prioritize media literacy and combatting fake news.
	Strengthen networking and collaboration efforts.
	Include recent, critical topics in sessions.
	Acknowledge the significance of these meetings.
	Organize real-world training and global exchanges.
	Collaborate with media-focused organizations.
	Create an open platform for discussions.
	Encourage regional journalist participation.
	Recognize the protective role of these meetings.
	Continue efforts to engage a diverse audience.

EDITORS'
BREAKFAST FORUM

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Editors Guild of Ethiopia