

# **CODE OF ETHICS FOR MEDIA PROFESSIONALS**

2020 Edition





**MEDIA COUNCIL OF TANZANIA (MCT)**

**CODE OF ETHICS FOR MEDIA  
PROFESSIONALS**

**2020 Edition**



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**T**he backbone of mature democracy is the existence of an independent, professional and responsible media. Such media enables the scrutiny of the forces that shape society, and is essential in realizing the promise of democracy. The media's foremost responsibility is to the public and should be accountable to it. It enables citizens to enjoy their rights to access information and freedom of expression as emboldened in the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania , 1977.

Article 18 of the Constitution provides that: Every person - (a) has a freedom of opinion and expression of his ideas; (b) has a right to seek, receive and, or disseminate information regardless of national boundaries; (c) has the freedom to communicate and a freedom with protection from interference from his communication; and (d) has a right to be informed at all times of various important events of life and activities of the people and also of issues of importance to the society.

The media strive to hold these rights in trust for the country's citizens and its work is guided at all times by the public interest, understood to describe information of legitimate interest or importance to citizens. Journalists need to commit themselves to the highest standards, to maintain credibility and keep the trust of the public. This means always striving for truth, avoiding unnecessary harm, reflecting a multiplicity of voices in our coverage of events, showing a special concern for children and other vulnerable groups, and exhibiting sensitivity to the cultural customs of their readers and the subjects of their reportage, and acting independently.

This Code sets the benchmark for these standards. It both protects the rights of the individual and upholds the public's right to know. The Code is the cornerstone of the system of self-regulation to which the industry has made a binding commitment.

This code also provides a frame of reference to the MCT's Ethics Committee when it becomes necessary to initiate disciplinary action against any member who flouts any Article of the Code. It is the responsibility of editors, publishers and broadcasters to co-operate with the Council to ensure the speedy resolution of complaints. This code is meant to ensure that members adhere to the highest ethical standards, professional competence and exemplary conduct in carrying out their duties.



Editors, publishers and broadcasters must ensure that the Code is internalized not only by their staff but also anyone who contributes to their publications or broadcasts. It is essential for the workings of this Code that both its letter and spirit is honoured by editors and journalists.

The Code should not be interpreted so narrowly as to compromise its commitment to respect the rights of the individual, or so broadly that it prevents publication or broadcasting in the public interest.

This code shall apply to the following: individual reporters, columnists, cartoonists, broadcasters, photographers, video producers, media managers and editors (who will be referred in this code as media practitioners). Others are media owners, publishers and Online content producers who shall also be bound by this Code of Ethics.

The Code consists of four chapters, Chapter One: Principles applicable to all media practitioners-print, broadcast and online media, Chapter Two: Principles applicable only to broadcast media practitioners, Chapter Three: Principles applicable to only online media practitioners and Chapter Four: Principles applicable to only media owners and publishers.

## DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS AND WORDS

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**Media Professionals:** Trained media/ practitioners who are practicing communication activities.

**Public Interest:** The term public interest is used in a wide variety of contexts. Its meaning varies according to the context. In the context of this code, public interest stands for the following: all issues of common benefit to the public, aspects that the public as a whole has a stake in, issues which recognize, protect and advance the general welfare of the public.

**Sensationalism:** Refers to exaggerating events and topics in news Stories. It includes reporting insignificant matters and biased presentation of news by blowing them out of proportions. Sensationalism also involves writing in a manner that intentionally appeals to emotions of news consumers.

**Fanaticism:** Refers to excessive zeal about something. It includes following and believing in something without questioning.

**Stereotype:** Refers to labeling or assigning qualities to groups of people as related to their race, nationality and sexual orientation, status, leading to discrimination and ignoring diversity within groups.

**Hate speech:** Refers to attack a person or a group would receive on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, physical appearances, or nationality, and has the potential of inciting hatred, misunderstanding and violence. Likewise hate speech stands for communication intended to degrade, intimidate, or incite violence or prejudicial action against someone based on race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability of all kind.

**Corruption practices:** Direct or indirect inducement or campaigning meant to secure favours from people in position or otherwise to influence certain outcomes.

**Conflict of Interests:** Refers to a situation that has the potential to undermine the impartiality of a person because of the possibility of a clash between the person's self-interest and professional or public interest. In other words, conflict of interest is a situation in which a party's responsibility to a second party limits its ability to discharge its responsibility to a third party.

**Media independence:** Refers to the ability to report information it receives without undue fear of being penalized. It also refers to the media that is

not controlled by any interest group, but still has access to necessary data.

**Accountability:** Refers to taking full responsibility of consequences resulting from acts or activities which one does or takes willingly, voluntarily, with active intellect and deliberation.

**Social responsibility:** Stands for obligations directing the media to place more emphasis on the promotion of the well-being of society rather than commercial interests.

**Plagiarism:** Stands for an action of making use of another person's material or ideas without proper acknowledgement or attribution of the source.

**Tastes:** The term taste is subjective and varies from place to place, from part of the society to another, thus becoming difficult for broadcasters to set taste standards acceptable by all audience.

**Decency:** Is concerned with respect for traditions, background and rituals of all people and their beliefs. It is also perceived differently depending on one's perspective.

**Online content:** Refers to content produced via the new communication technologies (as opposed to the traditional newspapers, TV and radio). They include internet, website and multimedia.

**Social good:** Refers to an act that benefits the largest number of people in the largest possible way, such as clean water, healthcare

**Human dignity:** Refers to the right of a person to be valued and respected and to be treated ethically.

# CHAPTER 1

## PRINCIPLES APPLICABLE TO ALL MEDIA PRACTITIONERS-PRINT, BROADCAST AND ONLINE MEDIA

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### 1.0 Truthfulness

Practitioners shall disseminate news and information based on truth and the right of the public to truth. In events or issues involving a controversial claim, they shall show the chain of evidences they have including sources both human and documents. They shall also verify such information with more than one source. A story shall be considered to be true if facts of the event or an issue are clear, comprehensive and portray the reality of events/ issues as explained by all parties concerned in the core issue.

### 2.0 Independence and conflict of interest

Practitioners shall remain independent of vested interests or external influences and shall report acquired information basing on facts and truth without fear of being penalized or influenced by individuals, interest groups such as advertisers, sources, story subjects, owners, special interest groups or any other forces both internal and external. Practitioners shall also protect and defend their independence from those seeking influence or control over news content. Independence will be attained if practitioners:

- i. Determine news content solely through editorial judgment and not the result of outside influence including media owners or management.
- ii. Resist any self-interest or peer pressure that might undermine journalistic duty and service to the public;
- iii. Avoid conflict of interest as well as arrangements or practices that could lead audiences to doubt the media's independence and professionalism.
- iv. Remain free of associations and activities that compromise personal integrity or undermine the reputation of the profession.

### 3.0 Accountability and responsibility

Practitioners shall recognize their obligation to the society and be ready to make the society's well-being a priority at the expense of their businesses interests and individual freedom. In order to do that they shall:

- i) Treat information as a social good and not a commodity.
- ii) Be accountable not to those controlling or owning their media outlets but to themselves, profession and the public at large including social interests.

### 4.0 Honesty and professional integrity

Practitioners shall participate in establishing, maintaining, enforcing and observing high standards of conduct so that the integrity of the profession is preserved. In order to ensure honesty and professional integrity, any practitioner shall:

- i. Identify her/him/self and the media house where she/he works. Use of undercover or subterfuge methods to gain entry into restricted places or access to information shall be done only as matter of public interest and with the permission of the editor.
- ii. Not tape or record anyone without the person's knowledge. An exception may be made only if the recording is necessary to protect the practitioner in a legal action or for some other compelling reason.

### 5.0 Accuracy, factuality

Practitioners shall ensure their media outlets are guided at all times by accuracy and shall not deliberately mislead or misinform readers or audience by commission or omission. A story shall be considered to be accurate and factual if:

- i. It reports facts in a proper context by providing not only the facts about an issue or subject but also the context surrounding it and presents all sides of the issue or subject.
- ii. Viewpoints expressed in a story are not presented in a misleading manner by giving wrong or improper emphasis or by editing out of context.
- iii. For an event or an issue involving a controversial claim, it

- presents the chain of evidences as narrated by sources and the information is collaborated by more than one source.
- iv. Headlines, sub-headings and captions accurately and fairly convey substance of the report they are designed to cover.

## 6.0 Fairness and balance

Practitioners shall treat people involved in a story fairly, making sure they have a full opportunity to respond to reporting that may affect them. A story will only go ahead without relevant responses if the opportunity to comment has been declined or if the editor is duly satisfied that all reasonable measures have been exhausted. A story shall be considered to be fair and balanced if:

- i. It gives all sides of the core issue or subject an opportunity to give their side of the story or seek and include comments from the affected individuals;
- ii. It gives equal treatment in the story the one alleging and the one responding to the allegations.

## 7.0 Right to reply

Practitioners shall give fair opportunity to reply to individuals or organizations affected or involved in a story before it is published or broadcast. A story will only go ahead without relevant responses if the opportunity to comment has been declined or if the editor is duly satisfied that all reasonable measures have been exhausted.

Where the editor has enough evidence to doubt the truth or factual accuracy of the reply or clarification, he/she shall be at liberty to add separately at the end of the clarification a brief comment showing his or her position in regard to the issue.

## 8.0 Corrections

Practitioners and their media outlets shall be transparent about errors. Whenever it is recognized that an inaccurate, misleading or distorted story has been published or broadcast; it shall be corrected or clarified promptly, without waiting for a complaint to be raised first.

For purpose of clarity, corrections shall apply to errors of facts and inaccuracies while clarifications shall apply to misleading or

distorted information.

Corrections should be clear and carry an apology to the affected parties and should be reasonably proportional to the error in terms of impact.

## 9.0 Fake news/information

In order to avoid spreading alarming false rumor or perpetuating misunderstanding or being conduits of information deliberately fabricated with the intention to deceive and mislead others, practitioners shall not involve themselves in the following:

- i. Disinformation; sharing information that is false and deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organization or country.
- ii. Misinformation; sharing information that is false but not created with the intention of causing harm.
- iii. Mal-information; sharing information that is based on reality, used to inflict harm on a person, social group, organization or country.

## 10.0 Presumption of innocence

Practitioners shall observe the principle of presumption of innocence where every defendant or whoever is accused will be presumed innocent and until proved guilty in a fair trial before the court of law.

## 11.0 Minimize harm

Practitioners shall not publish, broadcast or share materials that can put at risk or cause significant harm to audience or those involved in the content. In cases where a content likely to cause harm must be disseminated, extra efforts will be made to make sure the source understands the dangers and gives informed consent, and steps to mitigate the danger be put in place.

## 12.0 Anonymous sources

Practitioners and their media houses shall avoid the use of anonymous sources unless there is no other way to deal with a story. Care should be taken to verify the information from such

sources.

Information that constitutes a breach of confidence should not be published or broadcast, unless the public interest dictates otherwise.

### **13.0 Non-disclosure of sources**

A journalist shall protect the confidentiality of his/her sources of information and shall only divulge them at the demand of a competent court of law.

- i. They shall follow the in-house rules and get the editor's consent before granting confidentiality. Once such confidentiality has been granted, both the journalist and the media house shall honor.
- ii. The editor, being the final editorial authority, shall have liberty to demand of the journalist the source of the story but shall under no circumstances disclose the said sources to a third party.

### **14.0 Facts and opinions**

Practitioners shall distinguish clearly in their reports between comment, conjecture and facts. News shall remain objective but a journalist may be partisan in commentaries and opinion pieces.

### **15.0 Recording interviews and telephone conversations**

Except in justifiable cases, practitioners shall not tape or record anyone without the person's knowledge. An exception may be made only if the recording is necessary to protect the journalist in a legal action or for some other compelling reason.

### **16.0 Respect for privacy and human dignity**

Practitioners shall seek to understand the boundaries of public and private space. In this context;

- i. Intrusion and inquiries into an individual's private life without the person's consent will not be acceptable unless public interest overrides the right of privacy.
- ii. Things concerning a person's home, family, religion, tribe, health, sexuality, personal life and private affairs should be



covered by the concept of privacy except where these impinge upon the public.

- iii. Publication of information about individuals will be justified if such information is for: detecting or exposing criminal conduct; detecting or exposing seriously anti-social conduct; protecting public health and safety; and preventing the public from being misled by some statement or action of that individual where such a person is doing something in private which he or she is publicly condemning.

## **17.0 Intrusion into grief and shock**

In dealing with social issues of a particularly shocking or emotionally painful nature such as atrocity, violence, drug abuse, brutality, sadism, sexual salacity and obscenity, practitioners shall present facts, opinions, photographs and graphics with due sensitivity and discretion. Inquiries shall be made with sensitivity and discretion. In this regard, practitioners shall:

- i. Identify themselves and obtain permission from a responsible executive before entering non-public areas of hospitals or similar institutions to pursue enquiries.
- ii. Avoid the use of stories, pictures and re-use of file pictures of situations of death and grave illnesses of persons likely to resurrect distress among relatives and friends. Likewise, they shall carry out with utmost discretion and due sympathy reports about the dead and gravely ill.
- iii. Not profiteer from deliberate exploitation of the misfortune of those affected by grief.

## **18.0 Covering ethnic, religious and conflict**

Practitioners shall not publish or broadcast news, views or comments on ethnic, religious or disputes before proper verification of facts. Such information shall be presented with due caution and restraint in a manner which is conducive to the creation of an atmosphere congenial to national harmony, amity and peace and not in a manner likely to inflame the passions, aggravate the tension or accentuate the strained relations between the communities concerned.

## 19.0 Dignity and reputation

The media shall exercise care and consideration in matters involving dignity and reputation of other people. In the protection of privacy, dignity and reputation, special weight must be afforded to cultural customs concerning the privacy and dignity of victims of sex crimes, people who are bereaved, children, the aged as well as people who are physically and mentally disabled. The dignity or reputation of an individual should be overridden only if it is in the public interest and in the following circumstances:

- i. The reportage amounts to fair comment based on facts that are adequately referred to and that are true or substantially true.
- ii. The reportage amounts to a fair and accurate report of court proceedings, Parliamentary proceedings or the proceedings of any quasi-judicial tribunal or forum.
- iii. It was reasonable for the information to be communicated because it was prepared in accordance with acceptable principles of journalistic conduct and in the public interest.

## 20.0 Gender sensitivity

Practitioners shall avoid using words and expressions that imply that one gender is inferior to another or that perpetuates gender discrimination or inequality. They must ensure equal treatment for both men and women when it comes to source selection and desist from reportage that advocates hatred or incite violence based on gender.

## 21.0 Coverage of People with Disabilities and marginalized groups

Practitioners shall not publish, broadcast or share materials that are intended to ridicule or impute persons on grounds of their gender or physical disabilities. Likewise, they should avoid using phrases/words or labels or images that ridicule or prejudices against people on the above grounds.

## 22.0 Obscenity, taste and tone in reporting

Practitioners shall not publish obscene or vulgar materials unless publications of such materials serve the public interests. However, the following precautions should be taken:

- i. Photographs showing mutilated bodies, bloody incidents and abhorrent scenes shall be avoided.
- ii. Where such photos cannot be avoided, they should not focus on sexual organs or features that demean persons and more adjustments including cropping, sizing, color adjustment will be permitted.
- iii. An alert shall be issued to warn viewers or readers of the information being published or aired.

Practitioners shall not publish, broadcast or share news content which is in bad taste and has no decency. Laws of the land, regulations and standards of decency set by media regulatory authorities will be used to guide practitioners on appropriate content.

## 23.0 Use of pictures and names

Practitioners shall apply caution in the use of pictures and names and shall avoid publication when there is a possibility of harming the persons concerned. In this context:

- i. Manipulation of pictures in a manner that distorts reality and accuracy of news shall be avoided.
- ii. Pictures/videos or audio content shall not misrepresent or mislead nor be manipulated to do so. Captions to pictures shall give a reasonable reflection of the contents of the report or picture in question.
- iii. Pictures of grief, disaster and those that embarrass and promote sexism shall be discouraged.

## 24.0 Protection of children

A child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child and practitioners shall exercise exceptional care when reporting about children. In applying the spirit of this, they shall:

- i. Avoid the coverage which might cause harm of any kind to

- a child unless dissemination of such is the only way to serve the interests of the child.
- ii. Not interview, photograph or identify a child without the consent of a legal guardian or of a similarly responsible adult.
  - iii. Not publish or broadcast the names of any underage offenders (below 18 years) arrested by Police or tried in criminal courts. Where such identification must be made, the media house shall explain the overriding reasons that led to such an editorial decision.
  - iv. Not identify children who have been victims of abuse, exploitation, or who have been charged with or convicted of a crime.
  - v. Not identify children involved in cases concerning sexual offences, whether as victims, witnesses, or defendants.

## **25.0 Social prejudice/Discrimination and hate speech**

Except where it is strictly relevant to the matter reported and it is in the public interest to do so, practitioners shall avoid discriminatory or denigrator references to people's race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth, HIV status or other status, nor shall they refer to people's status in a prejudicial or pejorative context.

## **26.0 Violence and graphic content**

Due care and responsibility shall be exercised by the media with regard to the presentation of brutality, gratuitous violence, and suffering. In this regard, practitioners shall:

- i. Treat with caution materials promoting violence or unlawful conduct, or discrimination based on sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status.
- ii. Avoid content which depicts violent crime or other violence or explicit sexual conduct unless the public interest dictates otherwise.
- iii. Indicate a warning before displaying content or graphic which are inappropriate for certain audiences such as children.

## 27.0 Innocent relatives and friends

Practitioners shall not identify relatives or friends of persons convicted or accused of crime unless the reference to them is necessary for the full, fair and accurate reporting of the crime or legal proceedings.

## 28.0 Incitement of imminent violence

Practitioners shall not publish or broadcast materials that is intended or is likely to cause hostility or hatred towards persons on the grounds of their race, ethnic origins, nationality, religion or political affiliation. Shall take utmost care to avoid contributing to the spread of ethnic hatred when reporting events and statements of this nature.

## 29.0 Corrupt practices

Practitioners shall not solicit, accept bribes, gifts or any other benefits meant or likely to influence professional decisions.

### *i) Gifts and hospitality*

They should refuse awards, entertainment, gifts or personal favors that should in any way influence or appear to influence their professional decisions and judgment. In situations where gifts are given, the receiver should declare to the office authorities the receipt of the gift or treat.

### *ii) Preferential treatment*

They should not accept any preferential treatment under these circumstances to avoid being in a position where they would be under obligation to return the preferential treatment. Likewise, they should not use their positions or the knowledge gained as a result of their positions for private or personal advantage.

### *iii) Payment for information/sources*

Practitioners shall not give money or gifts to induce sources to provide information by them giving money as equivalent to buying news, which turns news as a kind of an unequivocal merchandise, which should not be the case.

### *iv) Payment to publish/broadcast information*

Practitioners shall also not receive money or any kind of payment as an incentive to publish or broadcast information. Likewise, they shall not publish, broadcast or suppress an editorial report or omit or alter vital facts in that report in return for payment of money or for any other gift or reward.

### **30.0 Plagiarism**

Practitioners shall refrain from plagiarism. In that regard, they shall:

- i. Attribute words directly quoted from sources other than the writer's own reporting.
- ii. Ensure that published or broadcast content in stories or programs does not contain plagiarized material and any borrowed content is properly attributed to the rightful author.

### **31.0 Advertisements**

Media outlets shall not allow any advertisement which is contrary to any aspect of this Code of Conduct.

### **32.0 Feedback mechanism**

Publications or broadcast stations should put in place defined feedback mechanisms for the purpose of addressing claims/blames given by readers or audience.

# CHAPTER 2:

## PRINCIPLES APPLICABLE ONLY TO BROADCAST MEDIA PRACTITIONERS

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### 1.0 Interviews/Discussions

Interviews/discussions are very popular way of broadcasting individual points of view. However, care must be taken to maintain the principles of fairness, integrity, objectivity and balance by securing a broad range of views. In this context, broadcasters/producers should:

- i. Not rehearse interviews or submit specific questions in advance. It is permissible to discuss in advance with the interviewee the purpose of the interview and the general subjects to be covered.
- ii. Arrange, conduct and edit interviews, analysis, forums and discussions for radio and television fairly and honestly.
- iii. Not distort or misrepresent the views of the participants or give a false impression of dialogue.
- iv. Not present pre-recorded materials as live interviews, analysis, forums and discussions.
- v. Give callers a prior warning about phone-in recording in order to avoid the use of offensive language, slander, racism and sexism.

### 2.0 Live phone-in programmes

Live phone-in programmes are an accepted and very popular way of broadcasting individual points of view. However, care must be taken to maintain the principles of fairness, integrity, objectivity and balance by securing a broad range of views. In this context, presenters of phone-in programmes should:

- i. Moderate discussions and not to vehicle their personal opinion(s) on air and must always treat their callers fairly.
- ii. Protect programme against capture by organized pressure

groups or by irresponsible individuals.

### 3.0 Tone of moderation and respect

Broadcasts, including talk shows and debates, shall at all times maintain a calm and professional tone and shall project a model of civilized, reasoned discourse, as well as respect for the human rights of all persons. In this respect, moderators should ensure:

- i. Broadcasts do not contain material that could be construed as an incitement to violence.
- ii. Programming on disturbances or other tense situations are balanced and factual.

### 4.0 Scheduling

Broadcasters have a clear duty to schedule programmes so as not to expose children or minors to disturbing or offensive material. To observe this the following should be taken into account:

- i. Programs transmitted during the watershed period shall not be repeated outside the watershed period.
- ii. Content which depicts or contains scenes of violence, sexually explicit conduct and /or offensive language intended for adult audiences shall not be transmitted outside the watershed period.
- iii. Excessive and gross offensive language should not be used in content transmitted outside the watershed period or at times when substantial numbers of children are likely to be part of the audience.

### 5.0 Programming for children

Broadcasters have a clear duty to protect children from programmes or content which is harmful or is not in good taste. To observe this, they must observe the following:

- i. Not broadcast material which is harmful or disturbing to children at times when a large number of children are likely to be part of the audience.
- ii. In children's programming portrayed by real life characters, violence may, whether physical, verbal or emotional, only be



- portrayed when it is essential to the development of a character and plot.
- iii. Animated programming for children, while accepted as a stylized form of story-telling which may contain non-realistic violence, must not have violence as its central theme, and must not incite dangerous imitation.
  - iv. Programming for children must with reasonable care deal with themes that could threaten their sense of security when portraying, for example, domestic conflict, death, crime or the use of drugs or alcohol.
  - v. Programming for children must with reasonable care deal with themes which could influence children to imitate acts which they see on screen or hear about, such as the use of plastic bags as toys, the use of matches or the use of dangerous household object as toys.
  - vi. Programming for children must not contain realistic scenes of violence which create the impression that violence is the preferred or only method to resolve conflict between individuals.
  - vii. Programming for children must not contain realistic scenes of violence which minimize or gloss over the effect of violent acts. Any realistic depiction of violence must portray, in human terms, the consequences of that violence for both its victims and perpetrators.

## 6.0 Safety

Broadcasters have the duty to ensure they do not broadcast programmes or content which may endanger children's safety. To observe this, they must should:

- i. Not broadcast any oral or graphic representation of children taking part in unsafe acts or in unsafe situation, or content encouraging them to enter strange or hazardous places unless specifically advertising for safety.
- ii. Not broadcast products being used in an unsafe or dangerous manner, or products that would be unsafe if used by children without supervision, unless specifically advertising for safety.
- iii. Not depict realistic toy weapons that could be confused with

- real weapons.
- iv. Preserve programmes with advertisement for at least three months in case of complaints from listeners/viewers.

### **7.0 Warning of disturbing or offensive content**

Shall broadcast warnings before or at the beginning of any programme containing language or pictures that are likely to be disturbing or offensive to ordinary viewers or listeners considering the time and space of transmission.

### **8.0 Editing and production standards**

All persons who edit report, interviews and other materials for air shall ensure that their editing reflects fairly, honestly and without distortion what was seen and heard. In this regard, the following must be observed:

- i. Interviews should be edited in a straightforward manner, preserving, even in short sound bites, the sense of the interview.
- ii. Answers should not be taken out of context or edited in manners that change their meaning. The narration leading to a sound bite must reflect the question that elicited the response.

### **9.0 Controversial issues of public importance**

In presenting a programme in which a controversial issue of public importance is discussed, the following must be observed:

- i. A broadcaster must make reasonable efforts to fairly present opposing points of view either in the same programme or in a subsequent programme forming part of the same series of programme presented within reasonable period of time of the original broadcast and within substantially the same time slot.
- ii. A person whose views are to be criticized in a broadcasting programme on a controversial issue of public importance must be given the right to reply to such criticism on the same programme.

## 10.0 Cartoons

Television programmes should not include excessive violence or scenes of torture in cartoons depicting human characters; neither should they show cartoons that attack people on the grounds of their race, religion beliefs or sexual orientation.

## 11.0 Elections and referendum

During any election or referendum period, as defined in applicable electoral legislation from time to time, all broadcasters are to comply with the requirements prescribed by the authorities spearheading election or referendum.

## 12.0 Competition for fair dealing

Broadcasters should ensure that in programmes and promotions providing prizes or rewards there is no collusion between them and contestants to avoid unfair advantage for one contestant over another.

## 13.0 Broadcast advertisements

When broadcasting advertisements, broadcasters should act in accordance with journalists' professional norms as well as in accordance with laws and regulations (TCRA regulations). In this regard, they should:

- i. Refrain from taking part in activities which are illegal and against professional convictions.
- ii. Limit advertisements to a maximum of 30 percent of the total daily broadcasting time.
- iii. Not mislead the audience through ambiguity or implication in sound or pictures.
- iv. Use product comparisons in advertisement fairly, based on facts which can be substantiated.
- v. Not in any way use advertisements that disparage or denigrate identifiable competitors or products.
- vi. Give genuine testimonials and endorsements and relate directly to the endorsee's personal experience. Testimonials and endorsements by children should not be used.

## 14.0 Guarantees and giveaways

- i. Give special care in advertisements offering guarantees or warranties to ensure the promised service is available as portrayed.
- ii. Do not describe 'free' products and services as free unless they are supplied at no cost or no extra cost, except that of postage or carriage.
- iii. Make clear the identity of any client whose advertisement deals with a matter of public or political controversy or campaign in sound or vision.
- iv. Broadcasters should not in any way grant commission, discounts or other incentives to individuals or groups that engage in unethical conducts.

## 15.0 Alcohol, tobacco, road safety and environmental claims

Take into account the relevant internal code of practice of the broadcasting organization concerned, before accepting or transmitting advertisements dealing with products with health, safety, environmental hazards or concerns.

## 16.0 Presentation

In broadcasting certain advertised products, state clearly whether an assembly or additional items (e.g. batteries paint or costumes) are needed before such products are used or in order for such products to produce the advertised effect. Do not underestimate the degree of skills required by a child to use the product. The skill required to achieve the results shown must be attainable by an average child in the age range for which the product is advertised.

## 17.0 Competitions

In broadcasting content relating to competitions, state clearly the rules of any competition referred to. The value of prizes and the chances of winning must not be exaggerated.

## 18.0 Sponsorship

- i) Accept sponsorship only from legally and socially acceptable organizations.

- ii) Avoid broadcasting advertisements that undermine the health and wellbeing of the society.
- iii) Avoid broadcasting of advertisements that compromise professionalism or affect the quality and integrity of a particular media outlet.
- iv) In broadcasting advertised material from sponsors or paid for content, broadcasters should differentiate them from news content.

### **19.0 Analysis, commentary and editorial**

All broadcasts should contain sufficient background information and explanation to enable the audience better understand the significance and consequences of information being reported. Journalists shall not insert their personal opinions or judgments in factual reports at any time.

- i) Programs concerning sensitive public issues, national values, public affairs programs and commentaries shall be handled only by persons who have thorough knowledge and practice of broadcast ethics. On the other hand, invited speakers in programmes should be people who are competent and qualified in the area in question.
- ii) Public affairs programs aired on time contracted to other parties shall name who is responsible for producing the programs every time they are aired.
- iii) Opposing or contrasting sides of public issues should be fairly presented.
- iv) Personal bias or prejudice shall not be allowed to distort the facts.

### **20.0 User-generated content for broadcasting on TV and radio**

In a situation where views are picked from the audience for the purpose of adding a different dimension to the content offered, editors or producers should observe the following gate keeping steps:

- i. Adopt and prominently publish on their websites their third-party content management policies, and the rules that users must follow to add comments or other content to their pages. These rules should clearly define permissible third-party

- content to allow the broadcaster to put it on air, treatment of anonymous comments, and complaint/notification procedures for violations of website policies or the law.
- ii. Monitor their websites (and their respective social media pages) and take measures to prevent or stop broadcasting of content that is unlawful, or violates human dignity or privacy, or constitutes hate speech. Where possible such monitoring should be prior to publication or broadcasting.
  - iii. Have in place content management policies indicating the kind of monitoring of user generated content the website applies (prior, ex post etc.) and what technologies are used for this purpose.
  - iv. Use whenever possible, available filters or other technologies to prevent the publication of insulting language or other easily identifiable and inappropriate content, the purpose being to ensure that the content that is aired on television or radio is safe.
  - v. Act immediately to investigate and remove unacceptable content as soon as the editor or producers become aware of it. They should act on their own volition (even in the absence of a complaint by affected persons or other parties) and shall respond immediately upon receipt of a legitimate complaint.
  - vi. Should have in place special policies and mechanisms for the identification and expeditious takedown of sexual content or non-consensual intimate images (photographs, video, etc.) in view of their especially serious impact on the privacy and dignity of the affected persons.

## **21.0 The use of third-party content from social media or provided by the general public**

Personal photographs, videos or written material published on social media are also considered to be in the public domain, and their use by the mass media exposes them to a potentially wider audience. In this regard, broadcasters should:

- i. Take into consideration the impact of using of such personal material and information, especially in relation to tragic events. Copyright-related implications should also be

- considered.
- ii. Photographs and video taken from social media should be carefully scrutinized and verified to establish their authenticity.
  - iii. The facility of obtaining images or videos from social networks or personal pages does not exempt media from their duty of care. The public interest in publication of such information should be weighed against privacy rights and protection of minors. The publication of images on social media should not lead to an assumption of consent of the original source for republication in other platforms or by the mass media.

## 22.0 Stage events

Photographers and video producers should not stage events. When they shoot video or photograph subjects in a studio, they must avoid misleading viewers to believe that the moment was captured in the course of gathering the news. Any interventions should be revealed so that they cannot be mistaken as an attempt to deceive.

# CHAPTER 3:

## PRINCIPLES APPLICABLE TO ONLY ONLINE MEDIA CONTENT PRODUCERS

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### 1.0 User-generated content

- i. Editors or online content producers should monitor their websites (and their respective social media pages) and take measures to prevent or stop publication of content that is unlawful, or violates human dignity or privacy, or constitutes hate speech. Where possible such monitoring should be prior to publication.
- ii. Editors and online content producers should adopt and prominently publish on their websites their third-party content management policies, and the rules that users must follow to add comments or other content to their pages. These rules should clearly define permissible third-party content, treatment of anonymous comments, and complaint/notification procedures for violations of website policies or the law.
- iii. Content management policies should clearly indicate what kind of monitoring of user generated content the website applies (prior, ex post etc.) and what technologies are used for this purpose. The editors or online content producers should use, whenever possible, available filters or other technologies to prevent the publication of insulting language or other easily identifiable and inappropriate content.
- iv. Editors or online content producers should make available to users a simple mechanism to report third-party content that users consider unlawful or in violation of website policies.
- v. With respect to comments that constitute hate speech, endanger the safety or physical integrity of individuals, or may cause other serious violations of human rights, editors and online content producers must make use of effective mechanisms to identify and disable such content as expediently as possible.



- vi. Editors and online content producers should act immediately to investigate and remove unacceptable content as soon as they become aware of it. They should act on their own volition (even in the absence of a complaint by affected persons or other parties) and shall respond immediately upon receipt of a legitimate complaint.
- vii. In cases when editors or online content producers do not engage in prior, general moderation of third-party content, they may nevertheless consider establishing a system of prior or expedited moderation for specific topics that may generate a significant amount of extreme or inappropriate commentary. In appropriate cases they may block third-party content and comments altogether.
- viii. Editors and online content producers should have in place special policies and mechanisms for the identification and expeditious takedown of sexual content or non-consensual intimate images (photographs, video, etc.) in view of their especially serious impact on the privacy and dignity of the affected persons.

## 2.0 Notice and take-down procedures

- i. Editors or online content producers should adopt effective mechanisms for reviewing public complaints or reports about material that may be unlawful or in violation of website policies. Complainants should receive confirmation that their notices are being considered.
- ii. As a rule, editors or online content producers should take action on complaints as soon as possible, taking into account requirements of relevant laws and regulations. Exceptionally, this timeline may be extended in cases that are especially complex from a legal or ethical perspective.
- iii. Editors may temporarily disable contested content in cases that require further consideration. Whenever possible and provided the relevant third-party content is not manifestly illegal, editors should make efforts to contact the author of such content, inviting them to provide their views on the received complaint. Editors may reinstate any disabled content if they are satisfied that it is accurate and lawful.

- iv. Editors should treat anonymous third-party content with particular care. Anonymity is a right to be extended to people in special circumstances (children, for instance, or victims of violence or other vulnerable groups). Normally editors and online content producers should expect all contributors to be transparent and to provide a legitimate contact point. They may block for a period of time, or permanently, users (anonymous or not) who engage in repeated violations of community guidelines, or may subject them to pre-publication moderation.
- v. Editors may establish rules banning the use of comment space by commercial entities or for lucrative motives, as well as the use of indirect or hidden advertising on the same space.

### 3.0 Use of third-party content from social media or provided by the general public

Personal photographs, videos or written material published on social media are also considered to be in the public domain, and their use by the mass media exposes them to a potentially wider audience. The facility of obtaining images from social networks or personal pages does not exempt media from their duty of care. The public interest in publication of such information should be weighed against privacy rights and protection of minors. The publication of images on social media should not lead to an assumption of consent of the original source for republication in other platforms or by the mass media. In this regard, online media should:

- i. Take into consideration the impact of using of such personal material and information, especially in relation to tragic events. Copyright-related implications should also be considered.
- ii. Carefully scrutinize and verify to establish authenticity of photographs and videos taken from social media.
- iii. Always be on alert to the dangers of publishing images showing unlawful or anti-social behavior. Exercise caution to ensure that they do not become a vehicle for the promotion or justification of illegality in general and organized crime in

- particular.
- iv. Be alert to real-time access, interactivity, instant comparison with competition, interconnection of information through hypertext and blending formats.

#### **4.0 Comments/Feedback**

Online content producers shall give room to viewers to comment on its stories. However, the system will block automatically those using abusive language.

#### **5.0 Removal/Blocking of content**

In order to avoid posts which contain unlawful materials (within 2 hours of the post with illegal content being reported) online editor must block or remove from the platform posted messages, images and other multimedia posts.

#### **6.0 Copyright restriction**

The principles of compliance with copyright apply fully to online media according to Tanzanian laws. The repeated publication of content and other material produced by other media, without their permission or appropriate attribution is a violation of copyright and considered a serious infringement of journalistic ethics. Furthermore, any quotation (fair use) of third-party content should clearly indicate the source/author of the material and comply with other requirements of copyright law.

#### **7.0 Plagiarism**

Online media shall not share or allow sharing of other persons' materials, ideas and works without giving proper acknowledgement. Plagiarism is a practice whereby words are directly quoted from sources other than the writer's own reporting without attribution.

#### **8.0 Attribution**

Online media shall respect copyrights and fair use of content. It will always give people proper credit for their work.

## **9.0 Protecting rights to content**

Online media should maintain control of content created and set guidelines for attributions and conditions for users to modify the content it creates. It will also ask permission before sharing and reposting content it did not create and will respect copyright restrictions when linking or reposting contents belonging to others. This will also apply to all images including but not limited, to photographs, videos, podcasts, graphics and mug shots.

## **10.0 Protecting privacy of contents**

Online media should protect privacy of its content and put a clear policy regarding permission to use or re-post its contents. The kind of information to be protected and policies to guide privacy will be in line with laws of the land and regulations guiding online governance and control.

## **11.0 Online archives, republication of third-party content**

Online media should, to the fullest extent possible, maintain online archives of their published content. Permanent archive materials contribute to the preservation of the historical record and should be redacted or taken down only in exceptional circumstances, such as when ordered to do so by a court, or when ongoing publication may seriously endanger the wellbeing of children or the physical and psychological integrity of vulnerable individuals, or if the original publication was inaccurate or suffered from serious ethical lapses. As a rule, every redaction should be accompanied by an explanation on the same page. Editors may opt for anonymization of sources instead of takedown of the relevant content where this is appropriate.

## **12.0 Online advertising**

Online media should not advertise or allow advertisements of contents undermining or contrary to any aspect of this Code of Conduct.

## **13.0 Disclaimer**

Online media shall have a disclaimer attached to its contributors' accounts for the purpose of differentiating personal opinions/

views and content contributors share on behalf of its platform.

# CHAPTER 4:

## PRINCIPLES APPLICABLE TO ONLY MEDIA OWNERS/PUBLISHERS

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Media owners or publishers wield tremendous power over the publications, radio stations, TV stations or online publications they own. In order to maintain the credibility, independence and professionalism, media owners/publishers should observe the following:

### 1.0 Independence

Media owners should not use their decision-making powers to grant favors or as an incentive to curb the independence and freedom of practitioners. The selection of editors and journalists, their promotion, remuneration and opportunities for training, should be based solely on the basis of merit and not any other and factors such as family ties, political affiliation or any other criteria.

### 2.0 Security of tenure

Media owners and publishers must ensure that editors and other media professionals enjoy contractual security of tenure and they may be dismissed only for specified infractions such as misconduct or incompetence after due enquiry. They shall not interfere in editorial work and shall respect the decisions of professionals in their employment.

### 3.0 Undue pressure or influence

Should refrain from suppressing or distorting information about which the public has a right to know because of undue pressure or influence from commercial, political, social, economic or religious interests.

### 4.0 Sexual harassment

Media owners should put in place sexual harassment policies that protect women and men from gender-based violence (GBV). These policies should have mechanisms to operationalize them and be

made available to all employees.

## **5.0 Payment for information**

Media owners and Publishers should put into place strict rules to discourage publishing or suppressing an editorial report or omit or alter vital facts in that report in return for payment of money or for any gift or reward. This, however, does not apply to advertisements or advertorials. Media houses shall distinguish editorial content and advertisements or advertorials.

## **6.0 Conflict of interest**

- i. Media owners shall not use their associations and activities to influence their news outlet to compromise their ethical positions and professional standards.
- ii. Media owners shall leave media professionals to make final decisions regarding any editorial work. In all ways, editorial coverage must be based on what the editor believe is solely in readers/ viewers/ listeners' best interest and not in the owners or publisher's desire and interest.

## **7.0 Professional competence**

They shall facilitate their employees to enhance professional competency through training and further studies. Moreover, media owners should ensure that their staffs are updated with new innovations in the communication industry.

## **8.0 Coercion or intimidation**

Media owners/publishers shall protect their media practitioners who may be under threat or attack, their working tools or their offices until such threats have passed.

## **9.0 Social responsibility**

- i. Media owners shall observe social responsibility obligation, which dictate media to place more emphasis on the promotion of the well-being of the society rather than commercial interests.
- ii. Media owners shall not interfere or abuse for whatever reason

the power of their outlets including that of monitoring government and other centers of influence and power on behalf of the public.

## 10.0 Scrutiny

Media owners should accept scrutiny of their own affairs. This scrutiny is not to be directed by the government but through structures formed by the media itself, such as Media Council of Tanzania (MCT), which provide for democratic accountability of the public for whom they publish.



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