

# EVENT REPORT

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

## TANZANIA

STEFANIE BRINKEL  
CORINNA GRABOWSKI  
LEA RÖSNER

SEPTEMBER 2017

## International Day for Universal Access to Information

CONFERENCE WITH MEDIA STAKEHOLDERS AND OTHER CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

**On the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2017, the Media Institute of Southern Africa in Tanzania (MISA Tanzania) commemorated the "International Day for Universal Access to Information" in Dar es Salaam. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) in Tanzania took part in the event which aimed at promoting citizen's access to government and public held information, necessary for participating in the governance process as well as accessing other social and economic rights.**

The "Access to Information Day" is a global effort which was initiated by the UNESCO and first held in 2016. It is designated to be held every year on September 28<sup>th</sup> in order to recognize the importance of the right of access to information. In line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it draws attention to respective rights, restrictions and obstacles linked to the field of access to information and journalism.

The conference was the first one in the country to be organized on a national level. Under the slogan of this year's conference, "Every Tanzanian has a right to receive information", the event began with a moment of silence for journalists who have lost their lives. Welcoming remarks were given by Kajubi Mukajanga, Chairperson of the Coalition of Rights to Information (CoRI). Subsequently, Mr. Kassim Yussuf from Zanzibar presented a poem on this occasion. Afterwards, H. E. Lianne Houben, Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of the Kingdom of

the Netherlands to Tanzania, addressed the audience. A key note speech was given by Judge (rtd) Amiri Ramadhani Manento, former Chairperson of the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG).

More than 100 media stakeholders and other civil society organizations participated in the conference. Throughout the program, speakers stressed the importance of access to information in order to foster transparency and strengthen democracy.

Amongst other things, the speakers highlighted that the Access to Information Act, which was enacted one year ago and which is supposed to provide for access to information and promote transparency and accountability, is not implemented yet since regulations still have to be formed. Participants asked the government to speed up the drafting of respective regulations on the Act.

On this occasion, media stakeholders challenged the government's decision to organize an event to collect the stakeholder's views on access to information regulations on exactly the same day as the worldwide jointly commemorated International Day for Universal Access to Information which involves many of the media stakeholders. The move of the government to leave the Open Government Partnership (OGP) equally raised some concerns.

**Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.**

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**[www.kas.de/tanzania/en/](http://www.kas.de/tanzania/en/)**



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Furthermore, the issue of shrinking space for the media and the civil society was discussed at the conference. Several speakers including representatives from a number of CSOs such as the Legal and Human Rights Centre and various journalists expressed their observations and concern that the work of journalists in Tanzania is impaired by fear, and many feel limited in their ability to raise questions without being afraid of severe consequences. At the same time, Article 18 of the Union Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania stipulates 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 highlight of the conference was the launch of a report on the access to information and an award presentation honoring the most transparent as well as unveiling the most secretive public institution in Tanzania, facilitated by H. E. Charles Stuart, Deputy Head of Mission of the Delegation of the European Union to Tanzania and the East African Community.



*H. E. Charles Stuart, Deputy Head of Mission of the Delegation of the European Union to Tanzania and the East African Community, addressing the audience*

to disclose information to the public, is the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF). The recipient of the 2017 Golden Padlock Award, implying not yet meeting the recommended standards for the disclosure of public information, is the Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC). A soft copy of the report launched shall be available at <http://www.misa.org>.

MISA Tanzania undertook a transparency assessment of various public institutions including the Bank of Tanzania, the Prevention and Combating Corruption Bureau, the Tanzania Insurance Regulatory Authority and others, and eventually nominated the "Access to Information" winners. The recipient of the 2017 Golden Key Award, in acknowledgement of the institution's efforts