

DARIK Radio, Bulgaria

Interview with CIME President Kayeromi D. Gomez

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Q: Tell me about CIME. How can you describe the Center in few words?

A: The Center for international Media Ethics is an international organization with members from all over the world. Our main objective is to bring media ethics to the forefront of media discussions. We encourage open discussions of ethical issues by media professionals, across the world instead of mere handouts on ethics by which journalists are supposed to abide.

Q: Do you think in times when many foreign publications and agencies are closing their bureaus around the world and the news bulletins are full with local news, there is a need to promote the cross-cultural integration between journalists from all over the world?

A: Take a Russian reporter who has spent a week or two in a little village of an African country. When he is given an assignment about that African culture or any other African culture for that matter, he will approach it differently and with more professionalism than a reporter who has never experienced any other culture in his life. And the professionalism will enable him to abide by a higher ethical standard when writing his story. That is why CIME believes that higher ethical standards need to be discussed in a cross-cultural environment.

Q: One of the main missions of CIME is to promote ethics in journalism. The meaning of "ethics" in African and European countries - is it the same?

A: Though people's understanding about ethics differ from one country to the other, the codes of ethics in all countries of the world are more or less written very similarly and the differences are not quite clear even though reporters face different ethical dilemmas depending on the country in which they live. Hence the cross-cultural approach to ethics in the media

Q: As for power - is journalism the "fourth" power in both developed and developing countries?

A: It is very unfortunate that journalism is yet to become a fourth power in some countries of the world. My hope is that through the work of DARIK Radio and CIME, all journalists in all parts of the world will come to a point where they will fully exercise their fourth power.

Q: Is journalism responsible in some way for the "freedom of press". I mean - you look at some of the recent African examples - Kenya, Zimbabwe. Is it necessary for the journalists to "fight" in order to serve the citizens and present the real picture?

A: That is why we cannot overstate the importance of the work of Reporters Without Borders and all of the other international organizations that are fighting everyday for a better journalism environment for the professionals of the media.

Q: Your first impressions from this year's trip to Africa? Where exactly did you go? What grabbed your attention?

A: It was a wonderful trip. People were welcoming, from the individual reporter in the newsroom all the way to the media owners. When we decided to found CIME we never imagined how huge the need was for media ethics discussion. Today, as you can see, within six months of our incorporation we have reached an unimaginable level. The African journalists were excited that we are bringing the first ever CIME Forum to them. They all told us that there is an extreme need such forums now more than ever, especially in these times when the western media are finding it harder and harder to cover some of the stories that are happening on the continent.

Q: Tell me about the education possibilities for journalists in Africa? What do you plan to do?

A: We need to understand that many journalists on the continent became journalists out of unemployment and for that reason they did not have the opportunity to get full scale training from an accredited journalism school. Therefore, there is a perpetual need for owners of media organizations to train these young journalists as they find their way to the top. In some countries journalists simply need to be trained in how to write a perfect lead that could make someone jump to that paper and read that story as soon as the newspaper comes out on Monday morning.

We are planning to hold many training sessions to enhance some of the most valuable skills that today's media professional must have. We hope that through DARIK's work and that of the international philanthropic community, we will get the funds necessary to achieve all these noble goals.

Q: You have plans for a big forum in 2009, right? Please give us some more information.

A: The forum is the first of its kind in which media ethics are seen from the eyes of the reporter. Open discussions on ethical dilemmas are strongly encouraged and possible solutions are proposed for everyone to refer to when the need arises. Most of the information of CIME Forum 2009 can be found at www.cimethics.org.

Q: What are the top "ethical issues/questions" you will discuss in African Forum 2009?

A: The CIME Forum 2009 will discuss ethical problems from all countries present at the forum: Brazil, USA, India, Germany, Bulgaria etc. Some of the issues being raised so far have to do with confidentiality, anonymous sourcing etc. There is no limit on what participants will learn at the forum and that is why it is an open discussion and presenters can choose what part of their story they want to share with the participants.

We take this opportunity given to us by DARIK radio to call on all people everywhere in the world to join their hands in this great project of the 21st century. Contributions can be made on our website and applications for the forum can also be found on our site. Early registration has begun and we encourage all media professionals to sign up for the CIME Forum 2009.