



### ICF AT CAUX 2011

ICF President **Bernard Margueritte** played a prominent role in two important conferences in Caux this year. He led the media session in the conference on Human Security, where he was joined on the panel by **Lotfi Hajji**, a Tunisian journalist, *Al Jazeera* bureau chief in Tunis, and **Bedan Mbugua**, General Manager of Royal Media, Kenya's largest media organisation. Bernard Margueritte gave an introductory speech on the state of the media, Lotfi Hajji spoke about the Arab Spring and Bedan Mbugua about the media fighting corruption in Africa. (See a summary of Mbugua's comments in this newsletter.)

During the conference on Learning to Live in a Multicultural World Bernard Margueritte led 12 hours workshops in 4 sessions. The prominent American-Lebanese journalist **Octavia Nasr** took part in the first two sessions, concentrating on the role of social and internet media and the lessons of Arab revolutions. Bernard led the discussion on where and why the media failed and ways for the media to work for good. Participants were very concerned and enthusiastic and the discussions were lively. The conference adopted the following Call to the Media:

*We, the participants at an international conference in Caux (Switzerland), dealing with the role of the media in creating an inclusive multicultural community, urge the media to restore the credibility and dignity of their profession.*

*We are living in a time of fundamental change. Trust, solidarity, values and ethics are being replaced by suspicion, selfishness, materialism and consumerism. We are convinced that the media should play a crucial role in helping mankind find the way towards a renewed, more human, civilization. There is very little chance that without honesty, open-mindedness and dedication to this cause in the media, we can emerge safely from the current global crisis.*

*The media can, and indeed must be a big part of the solution. By treating people, no longer as passive consumers but as active citizens, the media will enable all persons to exercise their rights and assume their responsibilities. That is the essence of authentic democracy. Embracing diversity rather than just tolerating difference, learning from others rather than simply promoting dialogue between cultures, religions and communities, is a fundamental mission of the media.*

*We therefore call on the media to restore their own dignity, and to help us move from a world of hatred and violence to a civilization of love and mutual understanding.*



*Delegates at the conference on Learning to Live in a Multicultural World, Caux 2011*

### MEDIA FIGHTS CORRUPTION

**Bedan Mbugua**, General Manager of Royal Media, Kenya's largest media organisation, spoke at the Caux Conference on Human Security:

As a child I learnt from my mother's firm faith, her care for those who needed help, and her refusal to tolerate dishonesty. When I became a journalist, I tried to apply these precepts in my work.

In 1988 *Beyond*, the magazine of which I was editor, exposed the fraud in the Presidential election. I was called to see the President. 'Why did you publish those articles,' he asked me. I replied, 'Because of my love for my country. I could see we are heading for dictatorship.' He demanded that I write a letter of apology, otherwise I would go to jail. I replied, 'I would rather be in physical prison than in the prison of my conscience.' So I was taken to court and jailed.

Corruption is destroying my country. Not long ago, when my newspaper was about to expose how a major bank was siphoning off public funds, the managing director came with a five million Kenya shillings, offering it to me if I would stop the article. We published it and he fled the country.

The political class are in denial about this situation. But now we have a new constitution, and we are using it to ensure that they listen to the people. Before a new Chief Justice was chosen in May, we invited civil society and individual Kenyans to interview the candidates on television – which has never happened before.

### ETHICS AND MEDIA PRACTICES

**Mike Smith**, journalist and ICF director comments on the phone hacking scandal and the spotlight falling on News International. He re-emphasises the ICF's determination to address the personal responsibility of those who work in the media:

The culture of an organisation is determined by leadership -- the tone at the top. Culture is also determined by the prevailing moral climate. The culture of individuals--the 'inherited ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge'--is nurtured at an early age. This is what you do; this is what you don't do. This is acceptable; this is not. Training in the ethics of journalism should be paramount at schools of journalism, knowing right from wrong and knowing how to come to ethical decisions in grey areas of dilemma and doubt when the issues are not cut and dried.

*The Sarajevo Commitment*, published by the ICF at a media ethics forum in Sarajevo in 2000, calls for best practice in the media. Part of its text reads: 'We undertake to apply and demonstrate in our own lives the values that we hope for, and often demand, in others... We are unlikely to be perfect, but we shall aim to be truthful and free of guile, selfish ambition, perverted behaviour and deception.'

Guile and deception were what did it for the *News of the World*.



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## september 2011

### THE ICF IN EDINBURGH

#### Scottish Parliament

ICF President **Bernard Margueritte** was invited by the Consulate-General of Poland in Scotland to take part in the Festival of Politics held at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh on 25 August 2011. His address, on *"The media at a time of crisis: part of the problem or part of the solution? A Polish example"* was chaired by **Magnus Linklater**, Scottish Editor of *The Times* and Chairman of ICF's UK Chapter.

Talking of the media in times of crisis, Margueritte said that the media is part of the society it is in. He summarised the important points in the current situation: concentration of media in a few groups, globalisation of news, emphasis on bad news – a lack of balance

The role of media is different from that of before. The media can be part of the solution in the world. New media can promote democracy, but sometimes one does not know the reliability of sources. "News is not the media," said Margueritte. "There is no lack of information, but there is lack of meaning. Traditional media has to do better, putting the news into context. There is no place any more for bad journalism, journalists have to go back to wisdom.....only the media can move us from understanding to mutual understanding."

#### Royal Scots Club

'All have a stake in the media,' said **Magnus Linklater**, editor of the Scottish edition of *The Times*, speaking in Edinburgh on 26 August. He was participating in a round table discussion on *the media and public confidence*, chaired by **Revd Logan Kirk** in the Royal Scots Club.

Members of the Scottish Parliament had 'a democratic duty to engage with our public through the media,' Linklater said. Great scandals are useful as they shine a light on the organisation involved. Linklater made an impassioned plea that people engage with the media: 'If the media are to improve, they need to have the public's involvement. Margueritte said that social media were a magnificent tool 'but we need the ability to check and re-check reliability. For that we need journalists. We need wisdom in journalism.'

Participants expressed concern about the ownership and finance of the media. Linklater said that the media 'have never ever been perfect. **Robin Williamson** (Executive Director) and **Hugh Nowell** (Director) gave a brief history of the International Communications Forum, founded by the British publishing executive Bill Porter. **Bill Donaldson**, a retired head-teacher, spoke of his enthusiasm for ICF's central document, the *Sarajevo Commitment*, drawn up at a conference at Sarajevo in 2000 as a statement of best practice for media professionals. He hoped that many more media people could sign up to it.

Twenty people took part in the discussion, including **Anne McTaggart MSP** (Member of the Scottish Parliament) and three of her staff.



*Magnus Linklater, right, and Bernard Margueritte, second from right, address round-table discussion on 'The media and public confidence' in the Royal Scots Club, Edinburgh.*

### SC IN USA

The USA Chapter of the ICF will be represented at the annual convention of the Society of Professional Journalists in New Orleans, beginning on 25 September, and will circulate the *Sarajevo Commitment* at the convention. For more about ICF USA contact Chairman **Bob Webb**, [Rewebb@aol.com](mailto:Rewebb@aol.com).

The *Sarajevo Commitment* will also be circulated at the annual summit of Images and Voices of Hope, being held in Peace Village in upstate New York from 15 to 18 September. **Roberta Baskin**, vice-chair of the USA Chapter of the ICF is president of the IVOH board.

### MEDIA ETHICS WORKSHOPS

Over the past three years the ICF has held a successful series of workshops on Media Ethics at the Lincoln University School of Journalism. Senior media professionals meet the students and share their experience of ethical issues they have faced in their careers.

The ICF now plans to extend these workshops to other schools of journalism in the United Kingdom. The Initiatives of Change Opportunities Fund has given the ICF a grant to assist with this, and we have recruited journalism graduate Jonathan Lopez as our Executive Assistant to help develop a marketing plan and encourage other schools to take part in the programme.

### THE ICF NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

We depend upon the generosity of our friends to continue our work. This includes running conferences and workshops, managing our contact database, and supporting the expenses of our President.

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