



Dar es Salaam

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UD-AF Dnr 37

Lyckat Öppet Hus om transparens, rätt till information och mediafrihet på ambassaden i Dar es Salaam

3 bilagor

- *Välbesökt Öppet Hus som signalerade öppenhet och transparens i både svensk politik och svenskt bistånd. Ett initiativ som gav mersmak.*
- *Intressanta och relevanta expertseminarier om svensk offentlighetsprincip och mediafrihet med bl a Olle Wästberg samt flera framträdande tanzaniska förändringsagenter.*
- *Stort genomslag i media med tydliga kopplingar till pågående men avstannade politiska processer om att införa moderna lagar om mediafrihet och rätt till information i Tanzania.*

Den 20 maj genomförde ambassaden ett Öppet Hus på temat öppenhet och transparens. Inbjudningar skickades ut via ambassadens stora nätverk av enskilda organisationer och särskilda riktade inbjudningar gick till journalister, informationsministeriet samt studenter på universitetets journalistutbildning. En färgglad annons i en av dagstidningarna bjöd också in till ambassaden.

Närmare 200 besökare deltog i dagens olika aktiviteter på ambassaden. Den mest populära aktiviteten var möten med ambassadören på hans kontor och med möjligheten att fråga om vad som helst. Tre expertseminarier med bl a Olle Wästberg (som baserat på egna erfarenheter kunde ge olika perspektiv på dagens tema) attraherade relevanta deltagare och erbjöd en intressant diskussion. En annan av aktiviteterna var mini-seminarier med presentation av svensk offentlighetsprincip och vad det praktiskt innebär för en svensk

ambassad, samt exempel på hur man begära ut en offentlig handling inklusive ett kort besök i ambassadens öppna arkiv.

Bakgrunden till satsningen var en ambition att på ett informellt men konkret sätt ge uttryck för en av de högst prioriterade frågorna i ambassadens dialogstrategi, där uttryckt på följande sätt; ”Priority issue 1. Freedom of media, transparency and the Tanzanian citizens’ right to information - closely related to the fight against corruption, building of democratic domestic accountability and securing free and fair elections.” Ambassaden för en aktiv politisk dialog med tanzaniska regeringsföreträdare om pågående men tyvärr avstannade politiska processer i Tanzania i syfte att reformera gammalmodiga restriktiva medialagar och dessutom införa lagstiftning om medborgarnas rätt till information. Bedömningen är att ambassadens Öppna Hus positivt bidrog till ny energi i denna process. Referenser gjordes också från ambassadens sida under seminarierna till regeringens särskilda satsning ”Öppna biståndet”.

Ur programmet (se mer information i bilagorna):

1. *Expertseminarier*. Tre välbesökta seminarier om transparens, rätt till information och mediafrihet.
2. *Meet the Ambassador – ask him anything*. Över 70 personer tog chansen att i små grupper sitta ned på ambassadörens kontor och fråga honom om vad som helst.
3. *Open Archives*.
4. *Exhibition*. Utställning med fokus på transparens, ansvarsutkrävande, mediafrihet och korruptionsbekämpning av tio av ambassadens närmaste samarbetspartners samt Världsbanken.

En mycket välbesökt presskonferens ledde till att fyra nationella TV-kanaler rapporterade från seminariet vid kvällens sändningar samt god täckning i både eter- och skriven media. Det kan noteras att kopplingen mellan rätt till information och kampen mot korruption - som tydligt gjordes av ambassaden - också uppmärksammades medialt, bl a genom följande rubrik i den populära swahilispråkiga tidningen Mwananchi: ”Swedish Ambassador cautions on misuse of public funds”.

Mer information finns på www.swedenabroad.com/daressalaam

HERRSTRÖM

Bilagor:

1. Inbjudan och program
2. Välkomstbrev
3. Exempel på artiklar i media

CC:

Abuja, Ambassaden
Addis Abeba, Ambassaden
Bryssel, Representationen
Dakar, Ambassaden
Dar es Salaam, Ambassaden
Harare, Ambassaden
Kampala, Ambassaden
Khartoum, Ambassaden
Kinshasa, Ambassaden
Lissabon, Ambassaden
London, Ambassaden
Luanda, Ambassaden
Lusaka, Ambassaden
Maputo, Ambassaden
Nairobi, Ambassaden
New York, Representation
PARIS, Ambassaden
Paris, OECD-del
Pretoria, Ambassaden
Utrikes EU, SB
UD-FMR
UD-MK
UD-MU
UD-PIK
UD-RCH
UD-SP
UD-UP
UD-UrIU
UD-UrH
UD-UrP
UD-USTYR
Högberg, Pereric
Hagelberg, Anders
Carlsson, Gunilla

Stymne, Joakim
Knutsson, Jan
Hellquist, Hanna
Kuhnel, Kristina
Beijmo, Joachim
Bjerninger, Jan
Pedersen, Anders
Herrström, Staffan
Dar es Salaam-Arkiv, Ambassaden
Kanerva, Jenny

Sweden: Media Council's role an asset

By Felister Peter

SWEDISH Ambassador to Tanzania Staffan Herrstrom yesterday reiterated the need for the government to improve transparency and press freedom to support the fight against corruption.

He was speaking during a visit by

Swedish Institute Director General Olle Wastberg to the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) offices in Dar es Salaam.

He congratulated MCT for regulating media activities in the country.

"MCT is a very big asset to the media fraternity since it regulates and deals with ethical matters within the profession," he

said.

For his part, Wastberg said that in Sweden they also had a law which regulates media activities. He said it was ideal for the media to have its own regulatory organisation such as MCT.

He said with such an organisation it would be very rare for cases related with the media to be taken to court.

Wastberg also stressed the importance of training for journalists, especially on ethics, because some committed mistakes simply because they were ignorant of professional ethics.

Meanwhile, Judge Mark Bomani, chairperson of the MCT Ethics and Arbitration Committee, said the media was a very important organ of the state

since it acted as a link between the government and the public.

He said without the media the public would likely not understand what was going on in their country. He said apart from informing people it also educated the public on different aspects of life.

Bomani said in Tanzania the media was relatively free but there was still a

tag of war on how the government should let media outlets conduct their activities.

He appreciated the efforts by the Swedish government in supporting the media industry in the country. "Sweden has been a prominent donor to the country's development projects. It is our friend in all weather and contributes generously to our development," he said.

cc all staff / AE

Swedish ambassador urges transparency in government

By Florence Mugarula

The Swedish ambassador to Tanzania, Mr Staffan Herrstrom, has appealed to the government to increase transparency, accountability and access to information as a catalyst for development.

Speaking to journalists in Dar es Salaam during a transparency seminar organised by the Swedish Embassy on Thursday, ambassador Herrstrom said increased transparency would radically improve accountability, strengthen democracy and enhance the fight against corruption in the country.

He encouraged the government to make transparency the rule and secrecy a rare exception for the mutual development of the country.

The envoy said given the current state of affairs, Tanzania was at a crossroads in its development endeavour

‘Will the tradition of secrecy and old one-party state laws media prevail?’

and that it needs to choose the path to follow for the betterment of its people's welfare. "I believe that Tanzania today is at a crossroads, will it choose the path towards increased transparency or will the tradition of secrecy and the old one-party state media legislation prevail?" he asked.

According to the diplomat, the tradition of secrecy and suppression of freedom of information was the main cause of corruption in many countries and that the media should be given the opportunity to reveal evils in the country.

He said the media was the basic pillar in building true democracy and fighting corruption which brings inequality and poverty due to misuse of public funds by a few people.

He challenged the local media to dig deeper and expose everything going on within the government and make public officials more accountable so as to build a decent, honest government that listens to the people.

Commenting on the state of democracy in the country, the envoy said it was encouraging that the world had witnessed crucial changes in the country from time to time.

"It is quite clear that Tanzania is doing well in democracy, we have seen the country changing from single party to multi party system in 1992," said Mr Herrstrom.

However, the envoy warned of misuse of public funds and advised the government to set in motion strategies

to deal with corruption.

He said: "Generally Tanzania is doing very well in terms of long term plans towards building a democratic state, but the government still needs to put more effort to curb the misuse of public funds."

On the forthcoming General Election, Mr Herrstrom said there was need for the Tanzania media to have real editorial independence to avoid being exploited by powerful politicians for their own selfish interests.

Former Swedish MP, State Secretary and chief editor, Mr Olle Wastberg, said media was a key player in promoting democratic change and that the sector should be left free to operate for the betterment of the country.

"Let the media make Tanzania the champion of democracy. This is possible as the media plays a key role in bringing democratic changes," said Mr Wastberg.

Repeal outdated Newspaper Act - Swedish Ambassador

By Felister Peter

SWEDEN'S Ambassador to Tanzania, Staffan Herrstrom, has appealed to the government to repeal the Newspaper Act of 1976 for enhanced transparency and democratic practice.

He made the call at a news conference in Dar es Salaam yesterday followed by a seminar on media freedom, transparency and the public's right to information.

The seminar was meant as

a way of giving Tanzanians an opportunity to appreciate the importance of the three aspects of democratic practice.

The envoy said the 1976 Act was overtaken by events particularly in that it denies people of their constitutional right to information.

Once the Act is repealed, he said, Tanzania would likely realise faster social and economic development since it would result in a higher level of transparency and freedom of the media "which

are crucial weapons in the war on corruption".

Ambassador Herrstrom urged the government to guarantee journalists as much access to information from the government as possible so as to increase accountability in the public service and, by extension, rein in corruption and cases of misuse of public office.

"I believe that Tanzania today is at a crossroads in its development. Will it choose the path towards increased transparency, accountability

and access to information?" he asked, rhetorically, adding: "I encourage Tanzania to make transparency the rule, and secrecy the rare exception."

Olle Wastberg, a former Head of Swedish Institute, legislator, State Secretary and Chief Editor of the Swedish 'Daily Express', meanwhile said improved media freedom would see public servants getting more accountable to the public.

He said transparency helps countries to have a good

public image, which he described as one of the important factors behind economic growth through which nations across the globe often build partnerships with international businesses.

Tanzanian media consultant and publisher Ndimara Tegambwage concurred with the ambassador, saying Tanzania would know true freedom of the press only after the 1976 Act is out of the way.

He said the law as it now exists doesn't give journalists

enough freedom to get newsworthy information from government offices, which effectively deprives the people of their basic right to information.

Tegambwage argued that the government had the responsibility of ensuring the flourishing of democracy, transparency and media freedom in the country.

"We want to see enhanced freedom of media and expression. Tanzania should be a country where people can

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request for information even on issues like government expenditure and get it right away," he said.

The Act gives the President powers to prohibit the printing or importation of any publication perceived to be jeopardising national interests.

It also empowers the minister overseeing the information portfolio to prohibit publication of any newspaper, effectively making it an offence for any person to sell, print or distribute such newspapers.

The Act has been invoked several times in recent years, including in October 2008 when the Kiswahili weekly 'MwanaHALISI' was suspended for three months, with Information, Sports and Culture Minister George Mkuchika saying it had violated the 1976 Act.

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