

Key-note Address of Hon Morris M. Dukuly Sr., Minister of Internal Affairs at a 3-Day Capacity-building Workshop of the Legislative Press Pool (LEGISPOL) held at the Market House, Snapper Hill, Carey Street, Monrovia, Liberia, June 26,-28, 2013

Madam President and officers of LEGISPOL, Executives of Media institutions in attendance; fellow distinguished invitees; our Development Partners present, ladies and gentlemen:

When I received your invitation few days ago, to be one of the lecturers of this Seminar, I was pleased to know that knowledgeable and concerned members of this noble profession were doing something to draw attention to some of the ills or obstacles that tend to mar the image and bring discredit to the profession now-a-days. I decided it would be good to make an input, giving the fact that I had been a long time practicing Journalist myself.

So, I have come to participate in this worthy exercise, meeting of minds to safeguard the profession for our common good.

I am of the opinion however, that my contribution should be a brief discussion of specific concerns which if adequately addressed by all concerned, will pave the way for creation of those positive effects on society.

For the purpose of keeping this discussion within the context of our topic: Legislature and the Media relationship from the Media Perspective, I will now endeavor to outline and expound on three key levels or areas of media relevance and impact on society.

The first of the three levels or areas is:

Level 1. Policy Development and Information.

The adage that Information is power is generally recognized throughout the world, although reluctantly or grudgingly by leaders of some societies, and appreciably by others.

At this level, the Media's role is critical in helping to herald public appreciation of leaders, or widely disseminate public outcry for decisions and policies they make advancing or hurting the public good.

It is vigilance of the media which drives the society, Governors and Governed alike, to promote good policies, and change the bad ones.

At the legislature, you must responsibly engage the Lawmakers with Development Journalism. Your News stories, Interviews, Analysis, Editorials and other means of public information should help them dwell upon and maintain a culture of news-worthy activities and shun those that are not.

Level 2. Guiding Effect of Values

The level and pace of development and security of a society is largely guided by its value system.

The cultural beliefs and norms, all of which make up the value system, tend to shape the character, mindset conduct manners and out-look of people in the pursuit of their daily lives

Journalists, referred to as the Watch-dogs of Society, should therefore draw out the goodness and suppress the bad in people. Decision Makers, opinion leaders, role Models, Star and the like will do even better when their ego is boosted for doing good.

You, at the Legislature, where the members are in the lam-light, with a charge to keep under pressure to perform, should be mindful to cultivate the effect of values.

Dis-engage from Bad-mouth Journalism, even if and when provoked, urged or persuaded to do so.

This brings us to our third level.

Level 3. Power and Momentum of Positive Identity

The first law of nature is Survivor of the Fittest". So man and beasts, even plants are locked in a perpetual ritual of survival. The struggle ensues I n different forms and fashion for equally different reasons, with no one wanting to be the loser.

For us humans, our methods in rivalry range from crude to refined and subtle, according to individual choice dictated by the level of civilization or discipline.

People struggle for Position, Power, Wealth, Fame, Pride, Honor, and Value, etc, young and old alike.

The fact is, nobody likes to be identified with a loser, but everybody wants to win. This is the under-dog mentality; when two dogs fight, every other dog around, wants to take issue with the one already down.

Journalists of Liberia, particularly, you the members of LEGISPOL at the Capitol, the home of our First branch of Government, must always resist the temptation of being in such a fray.

Rather, make use of **Level 3**, the Power and momentum of Positive identification. Hold your Legislators responsible to be in-toned with their constituents.

Encourage them, draw them, pressurize them; even challenge them, to work closely with the people, fully identify with their development needs, objectives and successes.

This will develop a culture of positive identification with the people- **Level 1**.

It will re-enforce for them the power of value by being generally appreciated and respected for responding to expectations -**Level 2**.

They will be encouraged, pressurized and inspired to make positive decisions, choices and Laws in the supreme interest of the vast majority; a charge they have sworn to keep as Legislators.

Finally, you, members of LEGISPOL will realize and be convinced and proud that by the particular style of your work, you are truly the Watch-dogs and mirror of the Liberian society, making a difference.

The work is hard, often risky, sometimes dangerous, but it is a worthy cause that must be done by someone, and that someone at this time happens to be you.

Congratulations, God bless you;

I thank you.