

Media professionalism valued

Zambia values highly professional and well trained media personnel that will positively contribute to national development, Information, Broadcasting and Tourism minister Given Lubinda has said the government would therefore promote media training partnerships as they were in line with the Patriotic Front's agenda to have a vibrant media able to provide checks and balances.

The minister, who had hosted a farewell dinner for visiting 18 Ohio University students of journalism at Golfview Hotel in Lusaka earlier this week, observed that the basic role of the media was to inform, educate and entertain.

Lubinda said the media could not perform the basic roles without adequately trained journalists.

The government, he said, valued media training partnership programmes such as the one between the University of Zambia (UNZA) and University of Ohio in the United States of America that have set up a Study Abroad Programme.

The programme would involve students from the Institute of International Journalism at the University of Ohio coming to UNZA on a study tour annually. Zambian students would also travel to America.

The 18 American students were in Zambia for three weeks and had stints at various media organisations including the *Times of Zambia*.

"As government, we value and welcome this development as it is line with our agenda to develop a well trained, professional and ethical media that will contribute positively to national development.

"The basic role of the media, as we all know, is to inform, educate and entertain. But the media cannot inform unless they are informed; they cannot educate unless they are educated, hence the importance of such training and exchange programmes," he said.

He implored the American students to highlighting positive developments such as the zero-tolerance on corruption besides media liberalisation to woo American investors and other sectors of society to Zambia.

UNZA vice-chancellor, Professor Stephen Simukanga said the programme once fully developed, would enable Zambian students and academic staff go to Ohio University School of Journalism on similar visits.

Simukanga said the collaboration between the two universities had already started bearing fruit through contributions of books and journals to the UNZA Department of Mass Communication.

Study Abroad Programme director, Yusuf Kalyango said the project was an annual US\$300 000 programme which had been in existence for more than ten years.

More than 3 000 students from Ohio University had visited several countries across the world.

An Ohio University student, Adam Fiango thanked media institutions that had hosted the 18 as interns.

Source: allAfrica.com