



Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa  
Groupe Intergouvernemental d'Action contre le Blanchiment d'Argent en Afrique de l'Ouest  
Grupo Inter Governamental de Acção contra o Branqueamento de Dinheiro em África Ocidental

## Journalists Charged on Ethics, *DG, GIABA*

Journalists have been charged to uphold the ethics of the journalism profession towards ensuring objectivity and fairness in their reports. The Director General of the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA), Dr Abdullahi Shehu made the call when a team of journalists from Francophone West African Countries paid him a courtesy visit at the GIABA headquarters in Dakar, the republic of Senegal on Wednesday, March 3, 2010.

The Director General stressed the need for journalist to abide strictly to the ethics of the profession in view of the critical role the media play in disseminating information to the public.

Dr. Shehu emphasized the importance of cross-checking facts in order to avoid distortion of information, bias and negative reporting. He admonished the visiting team to constantly keep themselves abreast with issues at hand in order to present facts devoid of sentiment.

The Director General of GIABA stated that the establishment of GIABA by the Authority of Head of States and Government of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 2000 was in response to the global threats of transnational organized crime, particularly the scourges of money laundering and terrorist financing in the region.

He added that GIABA is an ECOWAS institution as well as FATF-Styled Regional Body that ensures the adoption and implementation of international standards against money laundering and terrorist financing including the FATF 40+9 Recommendations.

Dr Shehu disclosed that core functions of GIABA include the conduct of mutual evaluation of member States based on the FATF 40+9 Recommendations and the undertaking of typologies exercises in order to determine the methods, techniques, trends, risks and vulnerabilities of money laundering in West Africa.

In a remark, the Leader of the visiting team and Consultant, International Institute for Journalism of INWENT, Ms Eka Neuman expressed appreciation to the Management of GIABA for the opportunity provided the team to gain first-hand knowledge about the mandate of GIABA in the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing.

Ms Neuman disclosed that in continuation of similar program recently held in Ghana for the Anglophone West Africa countries, the team of journalists selected from Francophone West Africa countries is participating in a two week workshop on Journalistic Challenges of Regional Integration in West Africa; History and Political Institution of ECOWAS aimed at strengthening freedom of expression and press freedom. According to Ms Neuman, the Institute which is based in Germany offers training programmes and dialogue sessions for journalists on topical issues including economic and financial crime reporting.

In this regard, the Director- General assured of the readiness of GIABA to provide technical assistance to the institute to develop training on financial and economic crime reporting for journalists in the region, stressing that GIABA will continue to support research base programmes and project thesis on money laundering and financing of terrorism.

Responding to the questions on the role of GIABA against corrupt practices, Dr Shehu pointed out that GIABA is not a law enforcement agency, but rather an institution that coordinate regional efforts to protect the economies from the proceeds of crime through provision of technical and mutual legal assistance to member States.

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