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SÜDWIND

Entwicklungspolitik

The Gambian Constitution guarantees every person „the right to freedom of speech and expression, which shall include the freedom of the press and other media“. Any harassment and intimidation of media institutions has to cease by Gambian law itself, irrespective the acceptance of recommendations Para 100 Item 15 to 30. For Südwind to “promote and guarantee the right to freedom of expression” is the basis of all civil society development. Especially the safety of journalists is critical, as they provide a necessary self-organizing corrective to improve the internal communication in any nation. Strong legal and practical action has to be taken to keep the freedom of expression robust, and let journalists live and function as required.

In the same light it is commendable to review the ongoing positive Institution-building process, which should be ready to take the next step at this point. A National Human Rights Institution that is separate from the government, and truly independent, is in a position to work dedicated for the full realization of human rights. Surely it is in Gambia’s interest to have institutions working to gain greater awareness of the state of human rights, and in turn find ways to improve the wellbeing of the people. The NHRI would also help to strengthen judicial organs, while promoting human rights education as accepted in Para 97 Item 52 and 53. This national institution would be the foremost institution to nationally work for international standards Gambia has agreed to uphold. The additional visit by Special Rapporteurs is recommended. Gambia would moreover be well advised to join the Convention Against Torture, and it’s Optional Protocol.

Female Genital Mutilation is a painful experience endangering life and health of many girls. They are disabled for life. Their children will be the next generation to suffer, and be more likely to be sick and weak, or even die. Surely mere “discouraging” of the practice is not enough as it concerns innocents being harmed in irredeemable ways. Para 97 Item 19 accepts to put an end to all negative cultural practices discriminating against women. Südwind recognizes bodily mutilation of women as one of the most negative cultural practice crippling individuals and society. FGM is a form of torture that never stops once it is inflicted. Outlaw the practice and educate women and men to make the best decisions for a healthy society.

Südwind calls upon the Human Rights Council to continue working with Gambia to achieve universal application of Human Rights. In this respect it is necessary to cooperate internationally to improve legislation and institution-building.