**COMMUNIQUE ON THE TWO DAY WORKSHOP ON CONFLICTS AND CRISES REPORTING ORGANIZED BY THE NIGERIAN PRESS COUNCIL WITH THE SUPPORT OF BAUCHI STATE GOVERNMENT, HELD AT ZARANDA HOTELS, BAUCHI, BAUCHI STATE, SEPTEMBER 10 – 11, 2013.**

The Nigerian Press Council, with the support of the Bauchi State Government, organised a two-day workshop at Zaranda Hotels, Bauchi, from September 10 – 11, 2013 to sensitize journalists on their role in Conflicts and Crises Reporting. It was declared open by the Bauchi State Commissioner for Information, Engr. Mohammed Dhamina, represented by Mr. Ishaya Maleka, Director of Information, Bauchi State Ministry of Information.

The workshop is the first in the series of capacity building programmes to ensure that the media are professionally guided and sensitised in the reporting of conflicts and crises in the country. It provided a platform which evaluates the roles the media play before, during and after conflicts or crises. It stressed the need for journalists to perform a professional mediating role in reporting conflicts and crisis with a high sense of social responsibility to enhance mutual understanding and peace building. It also underscored the need for co-operation, understanding and mutual respect by Journalists and security operatives in the service of the public.

**Observations:**

The participants at the workshop observed as follows:

* Thatlack of protection for media personnel who operate in conflict ridden zones; distrust between the media professionals and security agencies in sourcing information among others, are inimical to effective media practice in the country;
* That the usage of unverified information from the new and social media derogates from ethical journalism;
* That inaccurate reporting, sensationalism, stereotyping of groups, use of inflammatory language, unethical conduct, etc are some of the flaws in media coverage of conflicts;
* That journalists should monitor and report areas that expose early warning signals to conflict as contribution to conflict prevention and eschew reportage that could engender “societal” intolerance and prejudice.

**Recommendations:**

* The media, as the key stakeholder and purveyor of information, should contribute to the maintenance of peace and reconciliation in the country by reporting conflicts and crises within the context of the Code of Ethics based on credible, factual and unbiased reporting.
* Journalists should place high premium on the social necessity to protect critical information in public interest and the exigencies of national security.
* Journalists should be able to detect potential sources of crisis and evaluate what could incite violence while striving to maintain a balance between professionalism and the public’s right to know and the kind of information that could hurt the public psyche and constitute a threat to the nation.
* The media should refrain from promoting prejudicial stereotypes about groups and individuals through selective reporting not supported by facts and figures. The media should interact more with all interest groups, individuals and stakeholders so that no opinion or interest is marginalised.

