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**Media Development and the Right to Free Information and Expression.  
Some Southern African Perspectives.**

Abstract for paper to be presented at  
The Concluding Workshop for Nordic Africa Institute's Documentation Project on "The Documentation Initiatives on the Liberation Struggles in Southern Africa",  
26 – 27 November, 2009, Pretoria, South Africa

The paper will deal with three issues:

1. The first issue regards how the right to access to information and freedom of expression are central to the universal struggle for human rights, and particularly consisting of a brief discussion of what is implied by the term universal trying to see it in the light of Southern African Experiences by among others referring to the constitutional process in South Africa.

2. The second aspect will deal with these two sets of rights in relation to the development of democratic societies with a particular reference to the situation in Southern Africa. I will look at the legal situation as regards provisions for access to information as well as different forms of attempts to stifle freedom of expression. In this context I will exemplify my points by referring to how the regional organisation Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) with its national chapters has conducted campaigns for free access to information and issued alerts over infringements of freedom of expression in Southern African countries. I will draw my examples from among others a historical analysis of the situation in Zimbabwe.

3. The third question will imply a discussion of the role of different media in relation to securing these rights. In relation to this I will also discuss the relationship between new information technologies and the traditional mass media. Here I will use my research on the situation of the

media in Mozambique as a background to some reflections on what is implied by media for development.