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PUBLIC STATEMENT

EFSCRJ Urges Journalists To Embrace AI to Enhance Their Work

On the occasion of the 32nd anniversary of World Press Freedom Day (WPFD) 2025, EFSCRJ salutes all journalists, media practitioners and media outlets for their sterling work in bringing light to issues and holding the powerful accountable in the Gambia and beyond. In this regard, we grieve at the acts of violence and repression meted out to media workers leading to deaths, injuries and other severe consequences. We pay tribute to the fallen journalists and media workers in Gaza and other conflict zones. We stand in solidarity with the survivors and their families for their pain and grief.

As we celebrate WPFD 2025, we wish to welcome the creation of the Access to Information Act and other instruments as well as appreciate the largely safe and free environment in which our journalists in the Gambia operate. We have observed a proliferation of media houses and practitioners which augur well for the good governance of the Gambia. In this regard, we note with appreciation the progress the country has made in its freedom of the press indices from 2017 to date.

Notwithstanding, we deplore the continued presence of laws that undermine the freedom of expression and free press. Similarly, we remain disturbed by the several harassments against media houses and journalists including threatening remarks, lawsuits and other unhealthy actions from diverse actors including from the President, ministers, political parties, and politicians, among others. We urge the Government to ensure that journalists and the media landscape remains protected, safe, and open. We urge the Government to expedite legal and institutional reforms to guarantee greater safety and the development of the media.

Under the theme, *'Reporting in the Brave New World – The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Press Freedom and the Media'*, we urge journalists to embrace artificial technology as an indispensable opportunity to do their work well. Veteran journalists such as EF Small, William Dixon Colley, Baa Trawally, Deyda Hydara and Babucarr Gaye of blessed memory did not enjoy the existence of AI. Yet they employed innovative and groundbreaking tools and methods to dig into the remotest and the darkest corridors of power to expose corruption, abuse, and all vices in defense of the truth, transparency, and accountability.

Therefore, today with AI, journalists have practically no limitation in seeking and exposing the truth and distinguishing fact from fiction in playing their constitutional role with utmost accuracy, efficiency, and professionalism. We urge our journalists to make the best use of AI to modernize, professionalize and enhance performance and delivery.

We stand in total solidarity with the media and its practitioners knowing that the media is an indispensable tool for the protection of human rights, good governance, and sustainable development in society.

2025 – The Year of Transparency and Accountability