

Government to train journalists in economic reporting

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Government plans to train journalists in economic reporting to improve their data interpretation skills.

The training follows recent failure by journalists to interpret data which also turned out to be wrongly attributed to as the World Bank said it had not even issued out that particular data.

Minister of Information, Tourism and Culture Kondwani Nankhumwa disclosed this in Lilongwe during a press briefing where he clarified on reports that Malawi was being rated the poorest country in the World.



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Nankhumwa said such kind of erroneous reporting and failure to interpret data is dangerous as it has potential to misinform the citizenry and the international community.

Nankhumwa, who was flanked by Presidential Advisors on Communication and Economic Affairs, Bright Malopa and Dr. Collins Magalasi respectively, said the born of contention is failure by the media houses to differentiate between Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita in US\$ currency with GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) terms.

"These issues are quite different all together, that is why am saying it is very important that as journalists we need to emphasize much on specialized writing or reporting especially in economic reporting and to that effect my ministry is undertaking to get some scholarships which are available now.

"We will be talking to different media houses that they give us candidates within the newsrooms so that they undergo this

training in as far as economic reporting is concerned," said Nankhumwa.

He said, "Failure to interpret data is a serious course of concern in as far as these issues are concerned. One might ask that now what the way forward is because as government we are not saying that we are not poor, we are poor but not the poorest country in the world."

The aim of the training will also enable journalists to interpret economic data and concentrate on policies that will increase rural production and incomes for instance intensification of agriculture.

Association of Business Journalists Vice Chairman, Dumbani Mzale, who also works for the Nation Newspaper applauded the minister saying the training in economic reporting is important.

"We just can't wait Honourable Minister," said Mzale, "This is a specialized field that requires training for correct data interpretation."

Gregory Gondwe, Bureau Chief in the Central Region for Times Group also welcomed the development saying it will help in improving journalistic skills of media men.

The two said since there is need for effective reporting it is good that government through the Ministry of Information, Tourism and Culture has come up with this idea of training journalists in different media organizations.

Last week the media had been awash reports that the World Bank had rated Malawi the poorest country in the world, a fact the World Bank disputed through a press release Tuesday afternoon.

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