

Journalists from Russia and Africa embarked on developing an information strategy

The **Second International Journalists Forum of Russia and Africa** dedicated to the anniversary of signing the memorandum on information interaction took place on April 18, 2024.

The organizers of the forum are the Russian-African Club, Faculty of Journalism, and Faculty of Global Studies of Lomonosov Moscow State University with the support of the Secretariat of the Russia-Africa Partnership Forum of the Russian Foreign Ministry.

The forum of journalists was attended by diplomats and members of the African countries' governments, media industry top managers, producers, TV presenters, journalists, public figures, scientists, teachers, representatives of the cultural and media spheres. In total, about 100 people from 32 countries took part in the forum, including Russia, African countries, the Middle East, India and Brazil.

The forum was moderated by: **Alexander Berdnikov**, Executive Secretary of the Russian-African Club of Lomonosov Moscow State University; **Anna Gladkova**, Leading Researcher, curator for international cooperation at the Faculty of Journalism of Lomonosov Moscow State University; **Louis Gouend**, Chairman of the Commission for Relations with African Diasporas and Public Relations of the Russian-African Club of Lomonosov Moscow State University; **Ilya Shershnev**, program director of the Russian-African Club of Lomonosov Moscow State University, associate professor of the Faculty of Global Processes of Moscow State University.

Oleg Ozerov, Ambassador at Large of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Head of the Secretariat of the Russia-Africa Partnership Forum, Chairman of the Council of the Russian-African Club of Lomonosov Moscow State University, addressed the forum participants with a welcoming speech. He emphasized the important role of truthful media reporting real events. The diplomat spoke about the upcoming Russia-Africa Ministerial Conference, which will take place this November in Sochi. Foreign ministers of Russia and African countries will meet there. The conference was established by the decision of the Second Russia-Africa Summit in July 2023. "When preparing for this event, it is very important to create an appropriate information background, to provide both Russian and African media with diverse interesting information about the development of relations between our countries and peoples," the ambassador concluded.

The Dean of the Journalism Faculty of Lomonosov MSU, professor, academician of the Russian Academy of Education **Elena Vartanova** sent her greetings to the forum participants. She thanked her colleagues from the Russian-African Club and recalled that the club was intensifying its work on the eve of the 270th anniversary of Lomonosov Moscow State University. This date means

a new understanding of the role of science in the development of our country, noted Mrs. Vartanova. She cited the words of the Moscow State University's rector, academician Viktor Sadovnichy: "Russia would be different without Moscow State University."

The dean of the Journalism Faculty of Moscow State University noted that it is no coincidence that the forum is being held on the eve of the 225th anniversary of the great poet, creator of the Russian literary language, Alexander Pushkin, who laid the foundation of Russian journalism. The great genius brought the literary language closer to the language that is still used to this day in newspapers, magazines and even on the latest digital platforms.

Speaker from Togo, Ph.D., MBA, Director of the think tank for Afrocentrism, consultant on international trade and project management, **Yves Ekoué Amaiso**, emphasized the need to create a unified strategy for Russian and African media, which are forced to act in today's conditions of political, economic and information war unleashed by the Global West.

Speakers **Zenebe Kinfu**, President of the Union of African Diaspora in Russia, **Leonard Dossou**, Director General of the Benin Economist press group, **Ondua Ovona Joseph Julien**, a journalist from Cameroon, and **Tokologu Tau**, editor of Imbizo magazine from South Africa, spoke about the increased Western influence on African media. The speakers emphasized the need to create a work plan for specific actions to strengthen cooperation between journalists in Russia and Africa.

The head of the Main Department for Media Content Monitoring in Libya, **Jamal Othman**, spoke about the work of the organization he heads, and about its role in the fight against disinformation in the media and hate mongering.

Program Director of the Russian-African Club of Lomonosov Moscow State University, Associate Professor of the Faculty of Global Studies of MSU **Ilya Shershnev** stressed the importance of developing a new direction in the information sphere – preventive journalism. Moscow State University is busy developing an advanced training course in this discipline. As part of the course, it is planned to provide training in preventive journalism, public diplomacy, mediation, combating fake news, information handling, countering the terror and extremism ideology, and peacebuilding.

An expert from India, professor, journalist **Dwivedi Ratnesh** noted that "Russia is a model for India of how the Government supports the activities of national media, controlling and, at the same time, respecting the independent constructive opinions of journalists."

Maxim Reva, Deputy editor-in-chief for economics of the African Initiative news agency, shared the work of the agency's three correspondent points established directly in Africa, namely in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, and emphasized the paramount importance of personal communication between media workers and the audience. He also noted the enormous potential of

Africans who graduated from Soviet and Russian universities and became leading specialists in African countries.

Chairman of the Commission for Relations with African Diasporas and Public Relations of the Russian-African Club, representative of Cameroon **Louis Gouend** spoke about the information portal <https://rusafromedia.ru/>, which brings together journalists from Russia and Africa, and where truthful and useful information about our countries is published daily.

Louis Gouend also announced the start of a journalistic competition organized by the Russian-African Club of Lomonosov Moscow State University. Contest participants are invited to write articles about great personalities who have positively influenced relations between Russia and Africa. The winners will be the authors of the best articles and they will be awarded valuable prizes. The competition's results will be announced on May 25, the Africa Day in Moscow.

The Club expert, international journalist, academician of Petrovsky Academy of Sciences and Arts **Sergei Chesnokov** joined the session online from Cameroon, where he takes part in the fourth investment forum. He spoke about the great interest of Cameroonians in the Russian delegation and their desire to build an equal partnership.

The President of the Congolese Diaspora in Russia, **Patrick Boyanga Bozi**, expressed his confidence that Africans have an immunity, which helps them correctly perceive information. This immunity appeared due to the historically friendly relations between Russia and Africa.

Georges Romain Zobo, an entrepreneur from Congo, who graduated from a Soviet university, emphasized the need for practical actions to provide information support to small and medium-sized agricultural businesses in Africa.

Speaker from **Nigeria**, CEO of B2B PROM LLC, Ex-president of the Nigerian diaspora in Russia **Rex Essenovo** noted the importance of training personnel for Africa in all areas, and in particular in the field of media.

President of the Malagasy diaspora in Russia **Said Ali** supported the activities of the Russian-African Club of Lomonosov Moscow State University, calling it one of the key organizations for promoting the Russian agenda in Africa.

Africanist and writer **Igor Sid** emphasized that the African continent has always been a supplier of new senses, which Africa generously shares with the whole world.

In conclusion, the Executive Secretary of the Russian-African Club of Lomonosov Moscow State University **Alexander Berdnikov** noted that all proposals formulated by the forum participants would be taken into account during the work of the Journalists Association of Russia and African Countries. The main takeaway of the forum was the decision on the need to develop an information strategy for strengthening Russian-African relations.