

MACOSS workshop

The introduction of a Freedom of Information Act in Mauritius (26th Feb 2016)

Transcript of live-tweet by Christina Meeto @christinameetoo

@christinameetoo Feb 25

1. I'll be attending a MACOSS workshop on FOI tomorrow. Here are some of my papers on FOI & media self-regulation <http://wp.me/p21Xf-Ip>

@christinameetoo Feb 26

2. Attending the MACOSS workshop on FOI at St Georges hotel. Maxwell Kadiri is speaking
3. First RTI was launched in Sweden in 1766, followed by Columbia in 1888
4. France saw right to know is part of human rights as opposed to privileges and entitlements, says Kadiri
5. Public interest would override need for secrecy in case of MCB-NPF scandal
6. Exemptions should be clearly stated wrt national security
7. Principles of maximum disclosure, minimum exemption, public interest override, independent appellate mechanism
8. In South Africa, Human Rights Commission oversees appellate mechanism #foi
9. 16 African states have RTI laws #foi
10. Seychelles making progress towards RTI. Mauritius needs to catch up #foi
11. I commented about the Robertson draft report. Need to review Official Secrets Act and civil service manual #foi
12. I know constraints often cited are costs for implementation and training #foi
13. Also, really independent people are difficult to find in small country like Mauritius #foi
14. I believe there should be principle of maximum early disclosure using open data #foi
15. Chantal Kissoon commended l'express for counter since govt promise though it's only low-key. Should go beyond. #foi
16. I am concerned that very few journalists and policy makers are attending #foi
17. Bar council representative apparently said they are not concerned by FOI. Chantal

Kissoon expresses concern #foi

18. A rape occurs every 60 secs in South Africa, says Kissoon #foi
19. Last year's mission felt good political will. Had met MPs, legal people, minister of ICT at that time. #foi
20. Govts often overwhelmed by economic priorities. Civil society should chip in. #foi
21. Kissoon is talking about South African experience. All stakeholders were included for broad resonance. #foi
22. In South Africa, right to access information is primary legislation, overriding other laws. #foi
23. 3 principles in South Africa: duty to promote awareness, monitor state compliance, promote right to access #foi
24. Level of operational readiness was low. They strategised by incentivising compliance with help of media #foi
25. Fear of additional burden for civil servants. Need to assist them to adapt #foi
26. Human rights commission audits compliance. National level did well but local government was hopeless #foi
27. Need to ensure simple and cheap access without fear of repercussion #foi
28. Process will be long and organic. Should be broadly inclusive. Push for culture shift in civil service and work at community level #foi
29. Should take law to grassroots for access to basic information for all. For example, domestic workers earning a pittance #foi
30. We have to be mindful of challenges of implementation #foi
31. Not high enough uptake as they had not considered grassroots enough. Lesson learned #foi
32. Comments from the floor about Public Gathering Act as constraint to freedom of expression #foi
33. Kissoon says FOI has been most unifying law in South Africa #foi
34. I agree laws of obsolete (PGA, Official Secrets, sedition) but right now, we can only comply #foi
35. I also think it's unfortunate that media people are not here. Civil society should be included but media have to chip in. #foi
36. I also think the media should overlook competition and stop pulling blanket in separate corners #foi

37. One guy called Muneesamy is being very impolite as he himself says. Accusing academia of not incentivising! #foi
38. Typical confrontational and competitive spirit #foi
39. Kissoon turned off all lights to remind us about commonalities rather than divides and how grassroots people are helpless #foi
40. Kadiri says we should all say the same thing to government for synergy#foi
41. Unfortunately I missed presentation by Lola Shyllon due to an important call #foi
42. During Q&A, Shyllon says no forceful obligation in international covenants #foi
43. Kissoon says we already have powerful tools in our Constitution about #foi
44. Shyllon had referred to freedom of expression being enshrined in our Constitution #foi
45. An audience member raises issue of capacity and sanctions in case of non compliance #foi
46. Shyllon says electronic data makes it smoother though capacity is always an issue, no perfect example but should start process #foi