Participant name & Organization: Matthew Asada, US Embassy Accra Press Attache; Ryan Wilson, PAO UK Embassy Accra; German Embassy PAO; Australian Embassy PAO; Dave Wilson, AFRICOM Exercise Planner/Public Affairs and Comm Synch; Neil, SETAF-AF Press Attache.

* SETA-AF will have the mis/disinfo panel up their YouTube page

US PA

* Mis/disinfo coordination
  + Dubawa, fact checkers org
  + Came out before the elections in Dec – allegations
  + Dubawa came in & just published today their findings
    - There was a 4 month lag
    - Story that spread on social media and a rebuttal
    - A lot of work has gone into this – going to archives etc
  + The traditional media line still has a lot of credibility, authoritative voice
* Partnering w/media & fact checking voices & makes a difference
* A couple case studies like this for report
  + Ex of fake news – that US Embassy was on fire Jan 23
  + So how to debunk it – worked with fact checking orgs – give legitimacy by giving them stories
  + 2nd ex – Ghana Check – interest in that type of work; Giving them story to research
  + 3rd ex: Recently – some Nigerian person / African stream – that the US was employing influencers about 1966 coup
  + Came out of nowhere – wanted to look into it – files had been declassified back in 1999 – concluded NO US hand in the coup. No material / economic support
  + So what do we do?
  + Effective way of addressing this – WITH the government. Address in public setting w/ researchers, journalists, fact checkers
  + But not engaging w/ African stream or people putting out mis/disinfo

Australia PAO

* Something that is being pushed right now
  + Afrobarometer
  + Role of social media
    - Tracking what info is coming down from Sahel and being reproduced in English
    - space a lot of countries are working on
  + Amani (?) – think tank – did a huge study on mis/disinfo leading up to the election – top story on misinfo
* Australia has o programming on this right now but they are messaging
* Track and put out messaging in response to Australia’s positions

UK PAO

* Looking at mis/disinfo around Russia/Ukraine war
* No specific programs looking at disinfo
* Do have a program helping journalists train on reporting and scientific accuracy
* A lot of work w/partners
  + MFWA (Media Foundation for West Africa) - funded them to do the report on mis/disinfo in Ghana
  + Social media = particularly prevalent form of mis/disinfo – X
  + But most info comes from radio, something they are thinking about
* Andy Price (UK FCDO) – are there opportunites to do more training with journalists?

Germany

* Partnered with Dubawa to train journalists on debunking
* Northern part of Ghana
* And worked with MFWA
* Still new to them but trying to find ways to support Governemnt of Ghana and Civil Society
* Visitors trip to Germany for journalists working on mis/disinfo
  + Met w/government and media in Berlin, but every program had a specific location – some before weren’t in Berlin – and research institutes
  + And then journalists came back & had feedback session w/diplomats (Other than just Germans)
* Penplusbytes – had been funded by EU
* Less donor coordination for media landscape – most of this new on the development side - most run or others run out of foreign offices

US PA

* Need allied interagency donor coordination
* Continued illumination on case studies
* **CASE STUDIES**
* First convo between civ/mil /collaboration would be helpful
* Common – misinfo
* Military exercise demo
* Interesting to see
* Important that there is traditional media there
* Interesting case studies on how messaged
* **Pre-bunking** – rather than reactive, proactive
* Academic, fact checkers, media, university/media – acknowledged as resources – develop w/universities = more credibility
* ACSS / RAND reports
* Pointing out the vacuum – changes in engagement
  + Minister of State for Information – definitely has an interest
  + UK and Germany working on World Press Freedom day
  + Chief of Army Staff – Having served in Sudan and South Sudan – know the danger or mis/disinfo (mentioned in opening session)
* Norway – Canada – Netherlands working on this but not a lot of $
* UK – Gradual reductions of foreign assistance
  + But counter FIMI bit is still big for UK
* Big Ticket around elections coordination
* MFWA – monitors – funded by US
* EU is using Penplusbytes – Big Data