

**S A B C – SANEF – UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO**

*Transcript of the conference on –*

**TRANSFORMATION OF THE MEDIA IN A SOCIETY IN TRANSITION**

**Held at Hilton Hotel, Sandton  
18 & 19 October 2005**

**VOLUME TWO: 19 OCTOBER 2005**

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CHAIRPERSON: MS LIZ BARRETT  
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**CHAIRPERSON:** Good morning. It's day two of Transformation of the Media in a Society in Transition and this morning's first session we're going to look at why media freedom matters and how it relates to questions of national and public interest, which, like some of the sessions yesterday is quite a large topic.

We're going to start off with Mondli Makhanya from SANEF and Editor of the Sunday Times who will take us through SANEF's Why Freedom Matters Campaign and then we will have the Panel discussion. Mondli, you've got ten minutes.

**SESSION ONE:**

**WHY MEDIA FREEDOM MATTERS AND HOW IT RELATES  
TO QUESTIONS OF NATIONAL AND PUBLIC INTEREST  
Mr Mondli Makhanya,  
SANEF**

Greetings; good morning everybody. I always find this venue very intimidating because a few months ago I came here, I had a meeting at this hotel and as I was leaving, I was accosted by an old associate that I hadn't seen in a long time and he dragged me, screaming into the bar and I objected very strongly to being dragged into the bar, obviously, and once we were in the bar, we bought a drink and then I could tell that there was serious intent in him dragging me into the bar.

So he asked me: "Mondli, you're a Zulu aren't you?" I said: "I'm a Zulu-speaking South African." And then he said: "No, no, no, you're a Zulu, aren't you?" So I said: "Well, I'm South African of Zulu extraction." He said: "No, no, no, stop playing games, you're a Zulu, aren't you?" Then I said: "Okay, fine, I'm a Zulu." And then he started: "So why are you doing this to Mshololozzi?" And then for the next three hours, it was that. So I hope you will be kind today.

The significance of this day, October 19, it's a date that's very significant on the South African calendar, but it's a date that actually doesn't enjoy the kind of pride of place that a lot of other dates do enjoy and it's not because it's not a public holiday, but I just think that it's a date that we South Africans haven't recognised as we should. I mean, there have been attempts and media organisations always remember this day and black consciousness organisations always remember this day, but it is a day that holds a very significant place.

It's a day when we commemorate that dark day in 1977 when organisations were shut down and a lot of newspapers were closed by the apartheid regime. But subsequent to that, it has become a day when we celebrate the fact that in the post 1994 South Africa, we enjoy one of the greatest media freedoms in the world. This country does rate and rank among those countries on this planet that actually can pride ourselves in having a space to say what we want to say, to do what we want to do.

Obviously things are not perfect, there are still a lot of gaps and there are probably attitudinal attitudes, there are problematic attitudes at various levels of our society, whether it's the state, opposition parties and other civil society organisations, but generally South Africans can receive and impart information as they wish. So it's a day on which we celebrate that and I think it's something that we should, in years to come, actually entrench and encourage.

But obviously this freedom didn't just happen, it was fought for very hard by members of the media, by journalists, but also by progressive movements. And as much as they fought for it, the entrenchment of it and the encouragement of this media freedom is something that we, in this generation that currently enjoys it, should continue to fight for and make sure that the space that we have is expanded and that South Africans at all levels of income and - or racial groups or ethnic groups enjoy as much access to the media and fair treatment by the media as possible.

So it's to this end that we, in the South African National Editors Forum, have decided this year we went into a whole lot of introspection about our role as media, as journalists, about our role in the society. And we decided to embark on a campaign called "Why Media Freedom Matters / Media Freedom is your Freedom". Now this campaign is about the entrenchment of the rights of South Africans to receive and impart information.

We're not launching this campaign because we believe that media freedom is under threat, far from it, we believe that there is generally a good attitude towards media at all levels, we're launching this campaign because we want to highlight the centrality of the free flow of information to the existence of a democratic system and that media freedom is as important to journalists and to media institutions as it is to ordinary members of the public. And we want to sensitise members of the public to this, we want to sensitise stakeholders in the society to this fact.

But we will not, in doing so, we will not be embarking on a one-way process. We'll not be going out and lecturing our society about why media freedom is important. We want this to be a two-way process, we want to learn from society as well about how we, as the media, are perceived, how our role as journalists is perceived by members of society, by the people we interact with. Because as much as we want to sell newspapers and we want to expand our broadcast parameters and we want to have great ARs and so on, we also are here to serve the society and every journalist believes that we are an idealistic tribe, we journalists, and we want to serve our society.

So, the campaign will run from today for a period of six months. over the next six months we will be engaging with members of society. We'll be engaging with civil society organisations that we normally interact with in the course of our reporting, in the course of production of our newspapers and our broadcasts and so on, we'll be interacting with them, trying to find out what we are doing correctly, where we're falling short and what we could be doing better to serve the South African society.

We will also be highlighting media freedom debates in our various publications, in our various media outlets, in our various broadcast outlets and on the websites that exist, and we'll be interacting with government and government agencies about how we can best use the space that we have, this freedom space, both us and the state in order to keep South Africa informed about what is happening in society.

We will also be hitting the streets and interacting with ordinary members of the society, we don't just want to deal with people at institutional level in terms of organisations. We want to engage with ordinary people who read our newspapers, people who turn to newspapers when they need assistance, people who turn to newspapers when they have been messed around by furniture shops, people who turn to newspapers when state institutions have not delivered as they should, and people basically turn to newspapers for general information, for entertainment and so on. We want the South African society to know that we are there to serve them.

And essentially what we want out of this is that we want to create a society that appreciates media freedom, we want to create a society that says that 100 years from today, the freedoms that were fought for and achieved on April 27, 1994, that those people who live 100 years from today continue to enjoy as much, if not more, freedom than we currently enjoy.

But we also want to create a situation where the South African public trusts the media that serves them. There are certain levels of distrust that exists, I don't know if you listen to radio talk shows, you get a certain sense of that and we want the society to trust our credentials and know that we are doing the job that we do, we perform the task for them and that where we go wrong, we will say we are wrong and they must be able to tell us that we are wrong.

But most importantly over the next six months what we will be doing, we'll also be working very hard to improve our own standards. We'll be, in the course of conducting the debates that we'll be conducting as the South African National Editors Forum and other media organisations, we'll be critiquing ourselves very strongly about where we, ourselves, are falling short and actually working very hard to improve the standards of journalism in South Africa so that we continue to prove ourselves as, kind of like the town criers and creators of the past.

So just to round off, I want to invite everybody, whether you are in civil society, in government and in various sectors of society, that the media organisations will be opening their doors; the doors of editors' offices will be flung open over the next six months for people to come and engage with us and tell us what they think of us. And we will also proactively be going out and setting up interactions with various sectors of our society. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you, Mondli. We will now have the Panel on why media freedom matters and how it relates to questions of national and public interest. Each speaker will have 10 to 15 minutes and then we will have discussion and questions afterwards. Joel Netshitenzhe is CEO of GCIS, he will speak first. Then Snuki Zikalala who's MD of SABC News and lastly, Console Thleane from FXI, Head of Media and ICT Programme of the Freedom of Expression Institute.

Thank you, Joel.

**PANELLIST**  
**Mr Joel Netshitenzhe,**  
**CEO: GCIS**

Thanks, Chair. We should perhaps start off by expressing the appreciation of government for having been invited to participate in this conference and in part, wish to indicate that government wishes to join the media in commemorating this day. And if what is indicated in these texts is accurate, I should say, Chair, that I will disappoint you. I'm called a speaker and panellist and I'll disappoint you because I will agree with everything that Mondli has said.

The debate or the discussion that we are having on these issues is important because it does not have resolution. There will be no mathematical equation with accurate answers as to where the actual balance should be amongst the competing factors with regard to issues of media freedom. And in a transforming society such as ours, the question of media freedom and how it

relates to issues of public and national interest, I believe it's about intellectual and ideological contestation within any society. It's about interest and self-interest which we sometimes conceal behind generalisations about human rights.

It's also about nuance in the application of principles rather than simply about the principles themselves. And in an evolving democracy such as ours, it should be expected that in such debates we will oscillate between extremes in search of what one would call a reasonable rage. But what we have to accept is that we will not, in that oscillation, reach a state of rest, because if we did, what it would mean is our democracy is atrophying. Debates about manifestations of freedom, manifestations of democracy should continue, even if we might have created our objective as a nation of a united non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society. Those debates should continue.

With regard to the concept of media freedom itself, human civilisation has evolved in terms of social organisation to identify principles that are universal in the framework that they define, but principles that are only important and relevant because they find concrete expression in given societies or in given polities. In other words, re-statement of principle in itself is not enough. In our situation, these principles are found in our Constitution and Bill of Rights, particularly freedom of expression, freedom of the media, and one can assert that in actual practice an overriding texture of our democracy over the past ten years has shown itself to be one that allows the creativity and talent of writers, of producers, free reign.

This right and the culture that has evolved over the past ten years, no one can take away from our society, no matter how powerful they are and we need to emphasise that these rights, including media freedom are not a post 1994 invasion. From John Tengo Jabavu to Ruth First to Steve Biko to Percy Qoboza, our struggle has been about freedom of expression. So the media freedom that we're talking about is a product of the struggles that have been waged by the mass of our people, but we also have to recognise that there will always be limits to freedoms without which limits anarchy would be the order of the day.

The Constitution itself, for instance, prohibits provocation of races in hate speeches and so on. And I suppose all of us will agree that in our ten years of freedom, through legislation, through court rulings, through the practice of public bodies, we have allowed the free space, as Mondli was saying, for journalists to practice without any undue interference.

There have, of course, been expressions of concern and they come from various sectors of the public, individuals in positions of authority in the public and private sectors, those who are in the glare of public scrutiny will complain, for instance, about how we handle matters of defamation, matters of investigations by security agencies. Where from, for instance, individuals such as Brett Kebble and his family, to Jacob Zuma, there would be complaints that it needs reporting and analysis, the media tends to find people guilty until they're proven otherwise.

The media on the other hand has complained, for instance, about the Criminal Procedure Act, Section 205 in particular, but that's a continuing debate again about the rights and duties of citizens including media workers. But as you would know, what we have sought to do as government in discussion with SANEF, is to ensure that if journalists at all have to be called to give evidence, this should be as a last resort.

So the overall point that one is making, in agreement with Mondli, is that ours is a unique society, a society in transition which however relies on openness and transparency in order to perpetuate the new social order. Why is this happening, why does media freedom matter in the context of a transforming society? Why is media freedom in the national interest?

Firstly, I would argue that this is important for its own sake. Media freedom is important for its own sake because such is the nature of the human spirit that it needs space for self-expression and to try and circumscribe that space would be to court revolt. So for its own sake, media

freedom is critical.

Secondly, it is because we believe that access to information is the life-blood of our democracy and any progress that we might make in building a better life for all. If we were to take the accelerated and shared growth initiative, the announcements that we made last week, one of the critical factors for its realisation would be participation by the private sector and therefore you would need media that has got the space to understand and communicate the intentions of an initiative such as this one.

Another element that is critical to the implementation of this initiative would be interventions in the second economy and it is critical for that second economy that they should receive information about opportunities that exist. How they can access micro-credit, how they can access Public Works opportunities and so on. You need information from this second economy communities. The media, by understanding those communities and having the space to report on their activities, would ensure that all of us appreciate what is happening in the second economy. And you also need information within the second economy itself, what are the needs and what are the skills that exist in these communities for those needs to be satisfied.

The one example that one usually gives is to say that there are many, many pipes that are leaking in Soweto, but if you were to do an audit, you would find that there are many plumbers in Soweto and what is the contact between the plumbers and those people whose pipes have to be fixed. So information within the second economy itself is very critical and a free media that is able to communicate all these issues is therefore important for development.

Thirdly, ours is a unique revolution because amongst other things, we rely on transparency in order to perpetuate and promote this revolution. If we were to look at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, for instance, yes reconciliation was an important leg of that work, but also critical in that was that we needed to expose the nooks and crannies of apartheid networks and for that to happen, we need media that is investigative, that looks at these issues so that we are able to uproot those networks that might seek to undermine our democracy.

And lastly, media freedom is important, it's in the national interest because it should help deal with temptation and tendencies that develop amongst people with authority towards arrogance, temptations to corruption and so on, and therefore, media freedom is important because you need a media that is able to investigate and expose all these tendencies.

But positing media freedom in these times is inadequate. We need to look at other fundamental expressions of media freedom and one of these would be trends in terms of ownership, because it is my own submission that you cannot have media freedom to the extent that you need in a vibrant democracy if you have a situation of a conglomeration as well as homogenisation of news; concentration of ownership leading to situations in which the owners start cutting down on newsrooms, start cutting down on capacity for research and start encouraging tendencies towards lifting from newswires instead of investigative journalism.

You cannot have media freedom to the extent that you need in a vibrant democracy without diversity in ownership. That the mass of the people, including the poor, should not only be consumers but also be producers of news and analysis, they should have platforms in which they can express themselves.

You cannot have media freedom, I would again want to submit, if the commercial imperative results in a situation which we start limiting the freedom of editors to determine what should be the content of their news, their production, where the bottom line starts dictating content and editors are held on a leash to satisfy the dictates of advertisers.

Because many things have changed, I can use this example of one weekly newspaper about a year or two ago, reported about expired Brazilian chicken that was being sold in one of the

supermarkets and the story after some time just petered out. An investigation indicated that the supermarket had said they were going to remove their inserts, their advertising, and therefore the story had to be spiked. Can we have media freedom in such a situation in which the advertisers start dictating content.

I believe, also that we cannot have freedom in a situation in which you have unique forms of censorship. The first element of such censorship I would call self-censorship. Self-censorship where journalists defer to interest groups, whether in the public or private sectors. The one instance, if one had to be controversial, would be how we handle issues, for instance, pertaining to HIV/AIDS. The tendency more often than not is for us to await controversies rather than looking at the implementation of the comprehensive programme as it is unfolding and we tend to take, as truth, statements that are made from particular civil society organisations.

Even if those civil society organisations might be focusing on one element of the battle against HIV/AIDS, we ignore the comprehensive nature of this programme. We ignore the reality that South Africa now should have passed in the public sector about 70 000 people under antiretroviral treatment and very soon we'll become the biggest programme in the world. We have already surpassed the numbers in the private sector and combined, as I'm saying, very soon we'll become the biggest programme in the world. Why? Because, as I'm saying, sometimes we defer to some civil society organisations which focus on just one issue of this campaign and which believe, even if all elements of the comprehensive campaign are now being implemented, the approach should still be one of confrontation instead of partnership.

The second element of censorship, I would call Peer-Censorship. This is censorship of one another by journalists themselves to the extent that if any of our newsrooms were to acknowledge the positive work that is being done by government, they are immediately labelled as lapdogs. And interestingly, so pervasive as this approach has become, that to quote from the editorial of the Sunday World this past weekend, its argument is that a broadsheet like the Sunday Times, The Star and so on are failing and to quote: "because broadsheets are lapdogs, lapdogs of government."

Faced with that accusation, the broadsheets will then say the SABC is a lapdog of government and faced with that accusation, the SABC will then respond in kind if it is accused of not having covered the heckling of the Deputy President it will then stalk ETV and when ETV does not cover the heckling of the leader of the opposition in Delmas, then SABC will expose that. So we have this strange situation of what I call peer-censorship where everyone is accusing everyone else of being a lapdog of this or the other's interest. Why don't we allow free reign of ideas of creativity, of production and so on?

We raise these issues to argue that freedom is not an amorphous concept without value judgement, without a frame of reference. If we do agree that the overriding national interest in our country is to build a better life for all, we then need to pose the question, how are we using media freedom in order to ensure that we build that better life? What attaches critically importance to the issue of media freedom is the fact of its utility in shaping the evolution of nations, in defining the trajectory of development. Thus when we talk about media freedom or rather when we talk about media in general, we are not referring to an institution that is helpless waiting to be abused, but an institution that is uniquely powerful.

In Australia, the recommended revised Journalist Code of Ethics makes the point that many journalists work in private enterprise but all have these public responsibilities. They scrutinise power, but also exercise it and should be accountable.

So if media occupies such a hallowed position as a platform for public discourse, what should be its frame of reference? This brings us to the issue of the public and the national interest. Success in preservation and promotion of the nation state because the media does not exist outside of a nation state, the freedoms it enjoys are freedoms that express themselves within

the context of that nation state. We need to promote our founding consensus which is the Constitution and we need to recognise and promote basic principles which make us who we are.

And it is in this context that I believe the public interest should be treated. Yes, the public's right to know, we must speak the truth to power, we must expose malfeasance, but my view is that the definition of the public interest also has to be informed by the question, how does that public interest raise democracy to new heights, how do we improve the quality of life? If we do not do this, we lose our bearings, where sensation is pursued for its own sake and we miss the balance between education, information and entertainment.

We then encourage an approach where each of our media institutions compete with one another in dumping down. Thus, instead of careful strategies to find and occupy niches, we compete around tabloidisation of content. That becomes the new God, pursuit of quantity without quality. And recent experience I think has shown that attempts by the established newspapers to compete with tabloids in the terrain of the tabloids is a recipe for disaster. There's no way in which you can outdo them without losing your identity.

And in conclusion, I want to make three points, that media freedom like any other freedom can be enjoyed for its own sake, but the media faces the danger of consigning itself to social irrelevance if it ignores national objectives and the national mission. What we'll end up churning out would be the opium that dulls the senses and media will become an institution that connives in the destruction of the very values that make the existence of the media and media freedom possible.

Media cannot demand respect if it fails to assume its responsibility as a public utility in the popular search for a better life. Yes, we should critique policies of government and their implementation, but we should do so, adding value to the national endeavour. Yes, we should identify weaknesses in local government but we must also examine whether there are programmes that are being implemented to correct those weaknesses.

Yes, we should report about corruption, but we should also examine the environment how the soul of the nation is being poisoned by the spirit of conspicuous consumption that our own society encourages, where everyone wants to be seen to be doing better than the neighbours, than the Dlamini's, which we ourselves as the media, encourage. That critical challenge where we are seeking to build a society that cares, but at the same time we are operating within a socio-economic system that encourages greed, that encourages conspicuous consumption and those trends that then would impel people to seek to live above their means.

The media should participate in this discourse so that we not only deal with the manifestations of corruption, but also the environment, the social environment that encourages that. In other words, what one is saying is that we have got the environment in which we can exercise media freedom, we should do so in a manner that promotes the public interest, that promotes the national interest. We should dig a little deeper, search more intensely and you will find that in the serious pursuit of the nation, there is education, there is information, there is entertainment and even amusement galore, interesting things that would sell newspapers, that will draw audiences, but things that add value to a society which is endeavouring to better itself.

Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you, Joel. And now Snuki Zikalala, MD of SABC News.

**PANELLIST**  
**Dr Snuki Zikalala,**  
**MD: SABC News**

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. I'll start with a quotation from a Nobel Laureate of 2004, Amartya Sen, when he said:

"No substantial famine has occurred in any independent country with a democratic form of government and a relatively free purse. Famines have occurred in authoritarian colonial regimes, in repressive military regimes and in one-party states."

One thing that nearly all media advocacy organisations agree on is that the test for a free media is a constitutional protection of the right to freedom of expression. After many decades, indeed centuries of struggle, all South Africans had the opportunity to participate in the democratic process. Part of this process was the adoption of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Clause 17 of the South African Bill of Rights protects those rights to free expression since singling out the press and other media.

At the All Africa Editors Forum, our President, Thabo Mbeki, re-emphasised the importance of press freedom, and I quote:

"The truth, whether good or bad had to be told. Additionally, within our democracy there are other legislative and institutional provisions that provide further protection to the right to free expression."

To return to the test commonly utilised to test freedom of the media an organisation called Reporters without Borders considers a number of journalists murdered, expelled or harassed and the existence of state monopoly on TV and Radio as well as existence of censorship and self-censorship in the media and the overall independence of media as well as the difficulties that foreign reporters may face.

During the All Africa Editors Forum, our colleagues from Gambia told delegates horrifying stories. They said:

"Our offices have been burnt down, our press has been bombed and one of our editors has been shot and there had been no police investigations in any of these cases. Our Togolese delegates informed the forum on how journalists have been hounded and harassed in their country."

We, in the SADC countries, particularly Namibia, Botswana and South Africa, score very high on media freedom in this region. Media freedom is core to the mission of the SABC. Central tenor of the SABC is that in order to fulfil its public broadcast mandate, is to enjoy freedom of expression and journalistic creative and programming independence. In fact, the SABC Board, which is appointed by the President on the advice of the National Assembly, controls the affairs of the SABC, not politicians and it's explicitly mandated to protect the SABC's freedom and independence. Our freedom is protected by the Act of Parliament.

While the editorial policy goes further and explicitly states that our freedom of expression and journalistic and creative independence is protected by law and that this is fundamental to operations of a public broadcaster, but why has it placed such a premium on media freedom? The words of Amartya Sen as quoted at the beginning of the address, go to the nub of the matter. A free media provides an essential safeguard in the functioning of effective democracy. It encourages transparency and good governance and it ensures that the society enjoys the rule of true justice.

Freedom of the press is a bridge of understanding and knowledge. It is essential for the

exchange of ideas between nations and cultures, which is a condition for true understanding and lasting co-operation. It is only when freedom of expression is guaranteed that all citizens will be provided with the information they need to be free because it is then that we are able to reflect the world to the nation and the nation to itself.

While on the libertarian fringes of the media debate are those that argue that information is commodity and any restrictions placed on its dissemination amounts to unfair trading practise. Most would locate an argument around why a free media matters is within the public interest. Even the restrictions placed within a democracy on media freedom such as regulations around reporting on children and restrictions on racist hate speech, are also justified in terms of serving the public interest.

The public interest is generally posited to mean the interest that different sectors within society share in common. The national interest shares this notion of interest across different sectors, but extends that beyond civil society and importantly locates this interest within the national project.

It is also important to know that within a constitutional democracy such as ours in South Africa, the distance between public and national interest is very short. Locating the national interest within the national project is a key element. This means that the media who serve the national interests are making a conscious decision, as we do within the SABC, to actively engage with and promote non-racialism, non-sexism and democracy. Importantly the content given to this advocacy approach is rooted in an understanding of where we as South Africans are coming from, a past located within and emerging from a colonial system where white people were oppressed and exploited on the basis of race, class and gender. This has implications for the way in which we choose to report, but it does not prevent us from presenting colourful, critical and controversial programming, as we always do on focus and agenda and within our news.

Locating media within the national interest also requires a level of vigilance because there are a number of individuals both within the public and the private sectors that are only too willing to conflate the words "national" and "personal" as we always see what is happening currently. But within this paradigm the media cannot serve the national interest unless it is free. An essential element of free media serving the public and national interest is because such freedom allows everybody to participate in the national conversation.

However, when structurally the majority of the people are prevented from accessing the means by which to participate in such a conversation, the danger lights must flash. As such, the public broadcaster, in the context of a newly emerging democracy beset by issues of race, class and gender, notions of public and national interest are central to understanding of a free media. In order for the media freedom have a meaning and matter, the interventions have to be made at a range of levels so as to ensure a plethora of voices are heard. This can take the form of ensuring a diversity of ownership through initiatives such as MDDA and also anti-trust legislations, through skills development programmes, targeting sectors of society traditionally excluded from participation and the internal policies and goals of media organisations.

To illustrate the last issue, we at the SABC work towards a range of corporate goals so as to ensure that meat is given to the notion of media freedom. Key to news divisions delivering of the meat would be achieving the following goals:

- To ensure that the SABC promotes democracy and non-racialism by building empowerment through innovative programming that is informative, entertaining and educative in all official languages.
- And to ensure compelling professional and authoritative news and current affairs programming that tells the South African story accurately.

We'll never say in our media, especially within the SABC radio stations that the South African

Government has signed a deal to provide oil or fuel to Zimbabwe when it has not done so, we'll never do that. We have to report our stories accurately. And all of our stories have to be fair and they have to be balanced, while reflecting the world, in particular Africa, to all South Africans in line with SABC's editorial policy.

If media freedom in its fuller sense is only enjoyed by an elite, both within the nation and internationally, it means very much less and will serve neither the public nor the national interest, than when a free media is also one to which all citizens have access.

I thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you very much. And now from FXI, the Freedom of Expression Institute, the Head of Media and ICT programme.

**PANELLIST**  
**Mr Console Thleane**  
**Head: Media and ICT Programme, FXI**

Thank you very much and thanks for the invitation. I think it is going to be very difficult for me to make any meaningful contribution. This is always the case that as the last speaker, you are the casualty, but I'll try my level best.

Firstly, I want to say that it is fitting that the SABC, SANEF and the University of Limpopo are honouring October 19, and affording us an opportunity to reflect on this important day and what it means to all of us, both as a nation but also much more particularly as media fraternity in its broader sense.

The banning of The World and The Weekend World was expected as these newspapers were indeed embedded within a society that was opposed to apartheid by them. The situation has changed and as the speakers before me have said, we have a constitution that is celebrated all over the world as arguably the most advanced constitution. Freedom of expression and in particular, media freedom, is not only enshrined but it is guaranteed within our Constitution.

For the purposes of this submission or paper I will not get into the polemic between public and national. I do remember in 2003 there was this big debate about national public interests, what they mean, the differences and all that. I think that can be the subject of yet another round to revisit the 2003 debate. What I want to bring today, which is what I began just recently when we made a submission at the recent Convergence Bill Hearings in Parliament, is to start or to continue a debate that I think is very much needed, especially when you talk about media freedom; that is the distinction between what I will, on the one hand, call a liberal view of media freedom, and on the other hand, what I will loosely call a critical pro-poor perspective of media freedom.

And the need for me to make this distinction or to, I don't think that I'll exhaust it but to want to bring in this debate is when somebody asks me, when we talk about media freedom, freedom from what and from who? Allow me to make an observation, which is a general observation, a generalisation, if you like, that the liberal discourse which has somehow managed to become ubiquitous in our society, emphasises freedom from political power. This is not surprising because those of us who in various forms, occupy ourselves with trying to understand the liberal discourse, would want to argue that liberalism always hates and envies those who are in power, claim to speak for those who are powerless, but in fact loathe those who are powerless. So there's this contradiction about liberalism.

Of course we must say that it is important, and that is our standpoint, that we must have a media that is free from any forms of political interference. But I want to add - and I think that that is what somehow Joel referred to, the contradictions, the self-censorship, the peer censorship -

that we have in our society, a much more narrow understanding of media freedom. It is media freedom only from power as it is manifested in the form of government. The recent example of the Delmas heckling was a case in point where suddenly the need to reflect on controversial issues was debated as to, but that was not factual, there was no material, and all that. And that in itself is just a demonstration of some of the contradictions that exist in the society.

Indeed, media freedom matters more than ever before in our society as we are a nation that grapples with issues of service delivery, issues of accountability and in some instances, issues of corruption. And it is the media that serves as a platform to inform the public to serve as a platform for debate and reflection on issues that affect us and confront us as a nation, as a society. The demand for more spaces is even more important in the light of some of the contentious issues and developments that have arisen within the public sphere.

The critical perspective on the one hand attempts to question the political economy of the media. And for me in my observation, that is one critical question that is sometimes ignored, if not suppressed. Allow me to make that general observation that on a scale, and perhaps invariably, media freedom is only, is seldom seen in relation to freedom from influence by private property or what you can call capital.

So there is a tendency that when you talk about media freedom we talk about media freedom only in relation to those who are in power, that is political power, government, public institutions and all that. But when it comes to private property, when it comes to capital, when it comes to big corporations, when it comes to multinationals we never talk about media freedom. And I think that is a debate that we need to start reflecting and stop a reductionist narrow understanding of media freedom.

For me a thorough going debate around media freedom would not only touch political power but it will perhaps even more importantly focus on private capital itself. And I think that is where even most of the celebrated champions of media freedom might start to be found wanting in their advancement of what we understand by media freedom. Thus emerged therefore what I will liberally call or loosely call an intellectual hegemony, call it dictatorship, of the liberal / capital interest and understanding conceptualisation of what we understand by media freedom.

The submission that I would like to make is that media should be - and I'm repeating this - that our understanding of media freedom should be overarching. By media freedom we should be understood to be saying the media should, (1), be free to serve as a platform for all manner of views in the society so that those views can be transmitted unhindered, so that those views can then be debated freely by a society that will then be equipped to make informed decisions. And in that process, no views or perspective should be treated as being holier than Thou and no views or perspective or practices should be treated as being of a worse kind than others.

It is therefore my submission that media freedom matters for the public interest for the following reasons, that (1), media, if freed from some of the influences that I've talked about - and I know that usually when we talk about media freedom we talk about media freedom in ideal typical ways. And I think like Joel has said, it's a debate that will never be closed and we must never aim to resolve the debate and it is a debate that is characterised by some form of idealism.

So what I will just mention will be ideal typical perspectives that, (1), a free media is an interface between the public, what we generally call the general public on the one hand, and powerful sectors or influential sectors on the other. And influential sectors in our society is not only the government, influential sectors in our society is not only private capital, but in fact I want to argue that even civil society, from where I come from, has become a very influential sector of our society. So the media should become an interface between the general public on the one hand and the influential sectors on the other. And question all these sectors equally so and robustly so and not just question one sector to the exclusion of other sectors because in doing so, wrong assumptions are made that other sectors do not have some of the practices that can,

upon closer scrutiny, be questioned.

The second point that I want to proceed is that the media, a free media would offer a platform for free expression by the society and for the society. And in this particular case the observation that I think we'll all agree about is that within our broader society there are sections of the society that are denied that expression, that are denied self-expression and I think that we need to start reflecting on how best the broader sections of the society is afforded equitable expression, so that there can be a potpourri of ideas that permeate the broader public, but also that form and inform the broader discourses that characterise our debates.

The third important point - and I think this point is in relation to public broadcasting - is that a vibrant public broadcasting system would and should serve as a platform, particularly for the poorer sections of the society. I'm one of those advocates of public broadcasting and who believe that public broadcasting is the only media that the poor can make a claim on, because some other media, and I don't mean to say that some other media do not make their attempts, but the reality is that by its very nature, it is the media that the poor in our society can call upon, it is the media that the poor in our society can make demands on, because it is a media that claims and that has been formed to ensure that all ideas in the society are given a platform and a chance to be expressed.

The fourth element is that I believe that a free media will ensure an open society but more importantly a free media will ensure that there is accountability, particularly on the side of public officials. And that accountability will come in the form of some form of robust reportage.

Lastly, just like the public lectures and debates in the Socrates era, a free media serves as a platform for vibrant, forthright and at times even uncomfortable debates. But like I was saying during a radio talk show debate, I think it was this week, that the flip side or the positive side of what some of us might say are the excesses of freedom of expression as allowed by the Constitution and as practised in our society is that we have in our country a unique opportunity of ensuring that ideas are expressed freely and ideas are contested and ideas are corrected in the process of debt contestation.

And I'm beginning to play around, with the hypothesis that perhaps the lack of freedom of expression, perhaps the lack of spaces in a number of countries is what eventually leads to violent conflicts in the sense that ideas are never allowed to flow freely and they kind of build up and by the time that they are allowed, it is by the time that some multinational corporation has organised some arms, some rebel groups which are able to come on and propagate the very same ideas that have never found any expression in that particular society.

And I was saying that that is one of the good things that we have in our country and it is a practice that we can sometimes feel very uncomfortable with, there are times even myself as an exponent of freedom of expression, working at the FXI, I would like squirm and say, but you know, this form of expression is going overboard. But upon critical reflection I say that is the beauty of our country and that is the beauty of the spaces that we have.

In conclusion, it is my submission that media freedom is important so that we can, to use the common terminology, deepen and defend the freedoms that we fought for.

Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you, speakers. The speakers have emphasised various theoretical and practical aspects of media freedom and to some extent have criticised the present situation and are beginning to look towards the future and to how we should improve and deepen and widen our media freedom. And I would like the discussion, if possible, to emphasise these sort of aspects. Yesterday we had a lot of criticism of the current situation and the situation of the past.

What I would like, please is if you have a question, please ask your question. If you have a statement, that is fine, we're having a discussion today and you do not need to make a long statement that then ends up in a question so that you get a question in, okay? But if you have something to say, please try and keep it short and precise so that everybody can have a voice. Please introduce yourself. Thank you.

**MR LESHILO:** I'm Thabo Leshilo from The Sowetan. Two questions, one for Console and the other for Joel.

Joel, you bemoaned the fact that there seemed to be a problem with broadsheets trying to outdo tabloids in the arena of the tabloids. I wonder whether you see tabloids as a problem, tabloids *per se* or whether you believe that tabloids do have a place in society and a purpose to serve, but maybe I warn you against everybody trying to be like them? Won't you please clarify your statement on that one?

And Consol, Consol speaks of, there's equity and a reflection of all societies in the media. I'm wondering what that actually means. Does he actually say that the media shouldn't go out and defy this purpose and decide who it is that they are covering and who they are writing the stories for, for example, should know by now, feel compelled to report on the problems of people living in squatter camps and stuff like that, considering that it's supposed to be an up-market publication.

**CHAIRPERSON:** I will take a few questions and statements and then ask the Panel to respond.

**XLAPSI:** Thank you, Chair. My name is Xlapsi from the SABC. I've got three comments that may be responded to. The first one relates to, it's important for me to say this but it relates to yesterday's introduction that this conference is going to be an annual conference. And my observation has been that on the left hand side of the podium, out of 15 people that have presented, 15 men that have presented, only three women have participated, two of them chairing and one of them a panellist. And I think that we may want to improve on that in the next year.

Secondly, the point I'm raising, it has got nothing to do with the fact that we just want women faces there but then it's about perspectives in the media, it's about experiences, it's also about the points of view. And the second point then relates to that, the fact, it relates to Mondli's presentation around the campaign that he is talking about and I wish he was here yesterday because he would then get a sense of the kind of things that were coming up very strongly around African news values, around professionalism, the sense of responsibility of journalists, which leads me to my third question that I'm going to talk about, touch upon what Joel has talked about, as well as what Snuki has talked about.

Yesterday one of the presenters quoted something that really inspired me, which is the preamble of the Constitution and Joel talked about the constitutional right as well as Snuki talking about the constitutional right to protection of the media. And I think that wherever there is a right, there are also responsibilities. So if the media has a right to constitutional protection it also has a right, I think that civil society has a right to demand from the media a manifestation of what the Constitution stands for.

The point I want to talk about with respect to Joel's point relates to the fact that even here I'm not sure if there will be an answer as to the representation or the absence of the lifestyle part of the media and most of the points that are being talked about, it's as if that part of what is talked about in the media is not as relevant in terms of what we're talking about. I will make an example. Second economy that Joel talks about, that talks about food production, agriculture, the textile industry. What we need there is a debate around how do we best use the agricultural sector, which is something that is reported on in the Life Style magazine, how best do we use fashion, for instance, to create textile industries in this country to serve the second economy.

But if we don't have those people participating in our debates, we're going to see them as irrelevant, and I don't think they are. Thank you.

**PIPPA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And I'd just like to agree with the last speaker about women, I think there is quite an absence, which is notable.

I'd like to make three brief comments, if I could, and ask a question at the end. The first one is really a tribute because on this day I think that there are people among us, in this audience, including Thami Mazwai, who here is, Joe Thloloe, who really suffered, they actually went to jail for media freedom and I don't think that we should forget that in the context of this debate, and I'd like to use that as a precedent for what I have to say now.

The other person that I'd like to pay tribute to - and it leads to my second point - is a young reporter whose body was found in a dam in Qwa Qwa about a year ago, called Sonny Boy Thlathlane, who was doing the job of investigating some of the kind of unrest that there'd been in the Free state. I was working for the SABC then, it was something that we took up - I've taken up with various, even at Cabinet level actually, and his murderers still haven't been apprehended and I'm concerned that when that kind of thing happens in the provinces that we have a lot of, I think what every speaker said was really commendable, I was really happy with what I heard from every single speaker on the platform. But what we need to do is to watch that our words get translated into creating the structures that protect editorial independence.

So my second point, and I suppose it's really from my SABC experience and I'm sure Snuki will understand what I'm talking about, is that here in Johannesburg media freedom is not such an issue, but I can tell you that in the provinces Premiers are sometimes beleaguered, there is often a lot of factionalism. Our Regional Editor, I say our, I'm sorry, I was from the SABC but there are regional editors here who will tell you of the intense pressures on them at that kind of level and I don't feel that we as SANEF or even the managements of big newspapers and the SABC are doing enough to protect them. Yesterday Barney Pityana said something which I thought was really thought-provoking. He said about the young man who hadn't sent the footage of the booing, he said maybe he exercised his judgment but you just didn't like his judgment.

Well, there's reason for that. The last reporter who covered booing of the Premier in KwaZulu-Natal is no longer a journalist because of the kind of pressures that were exerted upon him by that level. So we really need to take those words I think that Snuki said, that everybody said, and put them into some kind of, to commit to some sort of structural protection for people like that.

My last point is that these things are - Joel is completely correct about the intellectual contestation. Yesterday there was a lot of talk about Western news values and African news values. I'm kind of perplexed because is South Africa African news value or is Gambia, which Snuki referred to an African news value. You know, in the United states, which is considered to be the kind of bastion of freedom of expression, there were socialists jailed for ten years for printing pamphlets against conscription in the First World War, there were black civil rights leaders who were stripped of their property under libel laws. Today there are journalists being killed in Iraq and being locked up by the American authorities. The point is, every battle for press freedom is exactly that, it's a struggle and it's a struggle in different countries around the world and I think that we should recognise that.

Then my question for Joel is, I'd obviously like to hear their comments, is simply this: When he speaks about the social environments being created for conspicuous consumption, I hope that he is not suggesting an end to Gwen Gill.

**CHAIRPERSON:** We're going to have some replies now and we'll move down the Panel from this side.

**MR NETSHITENZHE:** Thanks, and I do read the column every Sunday and sometimes it does influence what I then go and buy in terms of clothes.

Broadsheets and tabloids, I think the point that needs to be made is that whatever the personal views, personal feelings and personal attitudes towards any form of media, any genre, the starting point should be appreciating, promoting and defending the right of that genre to find expression. That should be the starting point. Or it might as well be that Mondli prefers to read the Sunday Independent, although he won't say so to his employers, but that does not mean that he should then say the Sunday Times does not have a right to exist, a right to continue in the form in which it is now being produced. That's the fundamental point.

Secondly, one also sought to make the point in the presentation that in any society there are niches that commercial undertakings will identify, seek to occupy and exploit and so should it be with media, there will be niches that various media should seek to occupy and the tabloids have found that niche, occupied it and have in fact proven that it exists and it has got commercial power. So there is nothing wrong in the tabloids *per se*.

There could of course be debates around some of the stories that are run in the tabloids but it's neither here nor there. My own fundamental point would be even in amusement there can be a serious contribution to the quest for a better life. Even in amusement around matters pertaining to what poor people do in terms of perhaps stealing this or the other thing, shoplifting and so on, could be interesting stories about conditions in which they live. Do they have children? Are those children eligible for the social grant, child support grant, do they know about it?

So the point that one is trying to make is that every type of angle to news can also identify what would help society as a whole to take itself to a higher trajectory of growth and development. So the tabloids have got a right to exist. There is a niche that they are occupying but I believe they can also make a contribution to the quest for a better life.

On issues of gender, I would agree, issues of the second economy, I would also agree and perhaps make the point here that beyond agriculture, to what extent are our economic correspondents examining, for instance, the various sectors of the South African economy that have got potential, extent to which there is investment in those sectors, what are the constraints to investments, and what can government do, and the private sector and other sectors of society, what they can do to ensure that there are higher rates of investment.

If we were to take business process outsourcing, it's one of the major sectors where practical programmes will have to be implemented to ensure that it grows because we have got lots of potential in that regard, but one of the constraints would be cost of telecommunication. My own experience - I might be wrong in this regard - is that the media will reflect on the issue of cost of telecommunication. Only when someone makes a statement, you won't find an investigative piece that goes to Telkom to look at cost of production; what are the reasons why telecommunications is charged at such a high rate compared to other countries? What are the solutions to that problem or would it be possible to lower those costs without destroying Telkom? Will the new or the second national operator be able to introduce competition? If we were to look at the cellular industry, did the entry of Cell C result in competition and lowering of costs and so on. All these issues require investigation and it will then be making a critical contribution on issues that really matter.

And talk about cost of labour. If someone makes the statement that the labour market regime in our country, it's rigid, and wages are too high and so on, we'll repeat that statement and the next time Cosatu protests about that, we will repeat Cosatu's statement. No serious investigation on this issue. And if we did so, amongst other things that we'll establish, would for instance be that in some instances it's because of the shortage of skills that the market will then settle by increasing the salaries of those skills where there is a shortage.

But secondly, the spatial settlement pattern that we have inherited and self-critically can say we are perpetuating in terms of where people stay, how far away from workplaces do people stay, such that the South African worker spends about 40% of their wages on transport, compared to say a Chinese worker who stays within walking distance of the factories where they work. There are all those kinds of complex issues that I think the media, if they did investigation, would be able to educate society about.

I'm hearing about a story regarding a journalist in the Free state whose body was found in a dam for the first time, and perhaps like any other criminal case we need to ensure that it's investigated. But should one also throw the ball back to pose the question, but why has SANEF and why have the media in general not made noise about this? Why is it not news? So it might as well be that the media is failing itself in this regard if the issue is as serious as you present it. And of course there would have to be investigation to determine what the actual issues are in that regard, before we make a conclusion that it's related to matters of media freedom.

Challenges in the provinces, that's an issue that we need to continue engaging on an ongoing basis and perhaps we need to make the point that it might be much easier to deal with matters of principle, the overarching frameworks from a national level in the interaction say between government and SANEF, and we need to acknowledge that it's in the practical expression of media freedom in localities that we can then say with pride that South Africa has achieved the ideal state that it is pursuing. In small towns, in villages there is familiarity amongst families including families of those who are being reported upon and families of the reporters. Are there pressures that are being brought to bear on the reporters?

Those are issues that we need to deal with and perhaps this emphasises the point that Colleen was making, that when we talk about media freedom, yes, we need to look at those who occupy political positions of authority. We need to look at those who occupy commercial positions of authority. We need to look at organs of civil society but perhaps we need to add, we also need to look at communities themselves. Do they sometimes bring pressure to bear on journalists, thus making it difficult for them to fulfil their responsibilities? Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you. Mondli?

**MR MAKHANYA:** Just very briefly, just to respond to the question on the fact that media freedom must also be accompanied by responsibilities. I fully agree with that. I don't think you'll find any journalists in this country who will disagree with that, and I think any senior journalist or editor will say definitely the media has responsibility. We have responsibilities to inform, not to defame, and we have responsibility to obey the law and also not to mislead, and we also live in a society that's transforming, a society with a serious problem of poverty and other issues, and so we have a responsibility to have a social conscience. And most media organisations that I know of in this country actually do go beyond just reporting the news, and go a step further and actually kind of have social responsibility programmes that help to uplift communities.

So definitely we don't live in a vacuum, we don't live in space and so we definitely have much greater responsibility towards society than just merely kind of informing and putting out newspapers and broadcasts.

The second thing I wanted to refer to is the question of freedom from commercial influence. It's something that's spoken about a lot and accusatory fingers are pointed at the media, that we only take on political, that we only want political accountability and that we do not take on political institutions and not necessarily commercial institutions. Yes, I agree that we don't do enough of it, there aren't enough investigations into corporates, there aren't enough investigations into private sector corruption and so on. It's obviously a much more difficult thing and it requires a lot more skill and knowledge.

And basically we need to do so because I think people feel that the state is their institution and

kind of like you'll get a lot more whistleblowers within the state, and also there's a lot more interest in what happens in government because people vote and people pay taxes and so on, but I don't think it excuses us in the media from doing those investigations because people want to know - I mean, like corruption is corruption, wherever it takes place and malfeasance is malfeasance, wherever it is. But I do think not enough acknowledgement is actually given to a lot of what the media does in terms of taking on the private sector.

I think the question of - if you look at the winners of this year's Vodacom Journalist of the Year Awards for instance, there were two journalists who took on the issue of executive pay and they put it on the agenda and now the society of South Africa is actually talking about executive pay, we're not just interested in the pay of DGs and Ministers and so on. Ja, editors are poor; editors are second economy employees. So I think that it was a very brave thing to do and I think it is something that is being done.

I think that the media also has taken on the issue of banking charges and it's something that has become a major point of debate in South Africa, and the banks are major advertisers in newspapers and it has not stopped the media from tackling that.

The same with cellphone charges. I mean, actually within the media there have been lots of very critical reports about how the cellphone companies are ripping-off the public, and as we all know, cellphones have basically replaced cigarettes as the mainstay of advertising. So I think it's early days, we're not doing enough, but I think there is an intention, there is a feeling in the media that we should be going in that direction and I think it should be acknowledged that it's the case and that the media does not just simply bow to commercial influence if it takes place, and that we have not gone the route of many places around the world where media actually does bow to corporate influence. We are, in South Africa, I think we are at a stage where we are still very much a robust media that's not only taking on the politicians and the political institutions. Thanks.

**MR THLEANE:** Thanks. I'll also try to be very brief. If I understand Thabo's point, I will answer by saying that in fact the point and the question that newspapers or media houses do have niche markets in itself suggests or shows that media, like many other spheres of our society, serve certain class interest, and that in itself raises another question that when we talk about - you remember earlier on I said the question was posed to me, that Console, when you talk about media freedom, freedom from what?

Another question is: whose freedom of expression? Because if we agree that the media tends to serve certain niche markets and there a lot of pressures are made to bear on whoever might be seen to be tampering with media freedom, then the question indeed becomes that it seems that certain class interests might be advanced by expanding the media freedom and all that. It's a very complex debate but I think it's a debate that we also need to look into.

By saying that we need to bring media freedom to the ability of the media to serve the poor, what I want to suggest and I think this is somehow the point that I want to develop from where Joel ended, is that, let's take for instance the existence of certain media that serve what are popularly known as lower LSMs. I've in the past debated with a number of editors of tabloid newspapers and all that and many people have disagreed with me on my criticism of certain tabloid newspapers.

But the point that I was trying to make and I still make is that indeed, what we need to do is to ensure that even in their simple presentation of news and analysis, we need to ensure that, one, there is no dumping-down of the readers of certain newspapers, because for me, it will be a very sorry state of affairs if by the existence of papers that serve lower LSMs, we seem to suggest that certain categories of news or certain categories of debates only need to be confined to your Business Days, your Sunday Independent and all that. So it means that only Console and Snuki will get into very robust debates and all that, whereas so-called lower LSM readers will not be

afforded to engage in such debates, and that is the point that I think one always tries to make.

You'd remember that I made a point that amid all these debates and realities, the fact is that commercial media needs to make money for the working-class, that is in fact the term that I am much more comfortable with, rather than saying the poor; for the working-class, the one media or the one media house that the working-class can make a demand on is the public broadcasting, because by its very nature it is public and therefore it can be claimed by all spheres within the society, and some of us have argued that middle-classes have got a lot of media. They've got Internet, they've got DSTV and all that, and therefore it will be encouraging to see the PBS trying and exerting much more focus and bias towards working-class audiences, towards working-class listeners and all that, and I think that if we can be able to strike that balance we can have a vibrancy within our media sphere and we can have some kind of a vibrancy and free flow of ideas within our society.

So that is the point that I was making. It is not to dispute that they are niche markets. I understand Business Day will remain Business Day; it's LSM 7 to 13 and all that. But I think that in talking about media freedom we need to always be conscious of the inherent class interest in those debates about media freedom. It might as well be that it is elite-class interest for media freedom and we need to be self-critical and always reflect on what we mean by media freedom. Thanks.

**MR ZIKALALA:** I think there's only one question directed to me by people in terms of political pressures that our journalists face in the provinces. It is true, I'm sure the public is not aware that 85% of our revenue comes from the private sector through advertising and only 2% from government and 13% through licensing, so government does not put pressure on us at all. I've never received a call from Jewel since I came back to the SABC. Actually I'm meeting him for the first time for almost one year, six months. To be honest with you, Joel will say: why did you run that story like that?

But provincially there is of course that element of intimidation by some political leaders which has resulted in some of our journalists resigning, and I've taken it upon myself, together with the CEO, before it goes to the Board. Because the Board that we have currently is a Board that wants to make sure that we enjoy our journalistic independence, and make sure that political, and not only political but even business people and NGOs know that we are totally independent.

The pressures that we get mainly are from NGOs. I can tell you, for instance, even if I'm lying in my bed sick and there are three marches of Cosatu in three different provinces and we only reflect one, I'll have fifteen calls; "why was so and so not put on air?" That happens with me, every time. Even if it's an alliance, I'll have three of - not the main political party that will do that, but the other NGOs will say: why did you have to take me out of the story itself? Why did you have to have Mbalula there, not Blade there? That's what he'll say to me. And I'll say, look, in as far as we're concerned the journalist who was on the scene, he's the one who decides what is important to put on air. We don't decide. We don't go into the newsroom and say, change this word, take this one out and that one out.

But I've taken it upon myself to have regional workshops which I've done in KwaZulu-Natal, one of the most critical areas, where the CEO has agreed that there should be regional workshops. I take through all what government media offices and Cabinet people, what the editorial policy means, so that they should understand that when the SABC is located in those regions it doesn't mean that it's a tool that they should use. And so we have taken that upon ourselves and the Board is watching keenly and the Board is interested in knowing what the outcome is. Because this Board of the SABC won't allow any interference from politicians in terms of dictating to us what we should do. The Board wants accurate reporting and fair and balanced, and we'll protect our journalists. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Okay, questions again. Thami wants to speak.

**MR MAZWAI:** I just wanted to raise an issue around accountability and media integrity, but before getting onto that I can't resist having a dig at Mondli, when he talks about that they have written stories about banks, about bank charges, that's generic. But taking on a bank is a different issue. Also you can write about the cellphone charges, but taking on Cell C or MTN is a different issue because those guys have got something to hit back with and that is a cheque, and that is something that all of us in the media, in the industry know and those guys can be vicious with their cheques and they do it, it's not a threat. So I think that I can't resist taking that dig at you.

But coming back to the main issue that I want to raise, Chairperson, isn't it about time that we open the debate on media integrity, an element of it is the extent to which the media is prepared to accept that we made a mistake. When there is an apology that is written, you find that, that apology is in a remote corner of the page. It's not on page 3 where the original story appeared. It's not on page 5, it's next to the funeral notices. When there's going to be a retraction there is tremendous resistance because it impacts on the integrity of the paper. It means that other stories have been wrong and yet my belief is that a retraction enhances the integrity of the publication.

Now the next thing that I'm extremely worried about is the whole question of when you are given an opportunity to respond to an article and you write a letter, I'm raising these things in general because people have come to me, raising these issues and I think that this forum could perhaps debate them much more earnestly. You write a letter because so and so said this, then you write a letter and the letter is edited in such a way that it protects the original story or the writer. There's that what I would call under normal circumstances dishonesty, but if I want to be nice and decent I'd say, well, there's just some economies of words, you know.

Then the last point which I really find absolutely surprising is that when the publication does publish the letter, then there a lines that says, "We stick by our original story." Why is that line necessary because to me it now creates the impression that there is now a contestation of ideas between the journalist and the subject, when in my understanding is that I as a journalist, I am merely a messenger, I convey information and if the person who comes back to me and says, no it's not true, let him have his say, at the end of the day the public are not idiots. They know that people will deny what they said in the first place when they see it in print. But why try and have that game of one-upmanship.

Then the last point that one would like to find out. I know it's difficult, is the whole issue of giving a story - before you publish you make the subject read the story, if only for accuracy and not for interpretation, and I find that young journalists resist that and they can also be working for Mafube. They just resist that because they say that you are questioning my integrity. Now are we talking about the journalist's integrity or the newspaper's or the media's integrity? Because whilst they're giving the story to the subject it's not easy in a daily. But I'm sure when it comes weekly's, when it comes to other long turnaround publications, that should just normally be done because you not only protect yourself from having to carry corrections in future, but at least you're going to give the story in such a way that the subject says, well, this is what I said.

So these issues are a very critical component for us because in the battle out there where publications are fighting for space and certain types of media are fighting for space, integrity becomes very critical for any publication, whether it be electronic or print, and why are we not perhaps opening the debate and addressing these issues? Thanks very much.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you, there were some hands here.

**COMMENT:** Ja, I just want to find out what the Panellist's view is regarding the next municipal elections. I was looking at the last bi-elections that when I look at what is happening in the provinces, the ANC happened to have swept all the bi-elections except for one which is in

Vryburg which was won by the ID. Now I'm asking this question because everybody says the people have chosen whichever government they want but I think this has something to do with how we look at the issue of multi-partism and a one party state in a way. So I'd like a comment on that, that is it a problem that we're beginning to see one party dominating elections and the fact that the IEC was not even part of this discussion? Thank you.

**MS DRUCHEN:** Thank you very much for the opportunity. My name is Bruno Druchen, I'm from DEAFSA, the Deaf Federation of South Africa. I'm going to use sign language because I've got an interpreter, just for all to know. I just would like to inform Joel and Snuki, I want to congratulate Snuki for providing the sign language interpreters on TV, plus on SABC2 and 3 and for the subtitles underneath, but we do need more sign language interpreting within the news. But thank you very much for your contribution in that.

The second thing I would like to inform you to please keep in mind that SABC Africa, you do provide interpreters there, but many deaf people within Africa do watch the SABC Africa news because it's playing a leading role. But we need to have an international sign language interpreter and not a South African Sign Language interpreter, because South African Sign Language interpreters are for South Africa specifically, but we have other sign languages within Zambia and all those countries and they misunderstand South African Sign Language. So it's not universal, so we need to use international sign language interpreters, and we have skilled international sign language interpreters, so that the rest of the continent can benefit from that as well.

When I was in England, the BBC there I saw the subtitles were there and when I was in America they have CNN and they've got subtitles as well, but that's more accessible for deaf people but I would like to encourage SABC to involve subtitles so the deaf people can have the information and also make relevant decisions on subjects. I've noticed many times on TV the President's speech or the Minister's speech. Whenever he's speaking I totally misunderstand. So I've got no access because there's no subtitles, there's no sign language interpreters. So I would like to encourage you guys to please provide sign language interpreters on TV and more sign language interpreters on TV within various programmes on SABC, like government subjects. And the subjects of freedom of association, freedom of media and so forth. But deaf people feel excluded from that because they don't have access to TV and so forth. The 6 o'clock news is a very short time but the rest of the time there is no access for deaf people.

But I would like to thank SABC for the first time on the 5th September during International Deaf Awareness Week, that Monday, the 7 o'clock news, was primetime, it was interpreted until half past seven and the deaf had full access. So what's sad is that DEAFSA received very much criticism from the public, that they do not accept the interpretation, that they want the interpretation to be taken off. So we feel that we don't have the proper support and not have the full access to that, so we'd like to ask the SABC to really continue with the subtitles and the interpreters.

Then the last point, the SABC they've got very political people involved in discussions and on the various different talk shows and that is access to information. That access is very powerful because it's a lot of information. So without information - yes we've got - the SABC's a very leading role in promoting access to information, but the reality like today, if we have the TV on right now, me, myself as a deaf person, will totally misunderstand what's been said. Government is saying I don't have any access. I feel like a fool because I don't have the information that they are giving to the media.

So I just need to then just to remember that or to keep that in mind. There are very much people who have got only ABET level education and they need to have access through interpreters to access that as well, that information. Thank you very much.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you. Phil wanted to speak.

**PHIL:** Thank you, Chair. I would like the Panellists to comment on the question of national and public interest, where do we draw the lines, what is the distinction? And this could be quite interesting considering that the Panel is drawn from diverse backgrounds. I would like to just hear what their reflections are on this critical question.

**COMMENT:** Thank you, Chairperson. Mine is a short question to Console Thleane and before I can ask that question I need to comment that there's part of the society that we have left out, or part of the people in the media, such as community media. I'm from the University of Limpopo but I'm also from the National Community Radio Forum so I would like that when next year we speak, when we come for the conference next year, we need to include people from community media because they also serve part of a society and the topics under discussion here affect them.

So to Console, I've heard you say the public media can be claimed by the working-class, by those people, which raises a question in my mind as to what about community radio. Have you left them out because you're afraid of the SABC? You're not exercising your freedom as well, you know. So why aren't you saying anything about that?

And the reason I'm also commenting about community radio is that sometimes censorship comes from the Chiefs, you know. In fact they are faced with that more than the others. They can't report some crime cases because they live in the Boklakwa community where that can have repercussions so their media freedom is indeed stifled. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you. There will be a lot more opportunity today for discussion and it is now nearly teatime and I'm going to give the Panel each one minute to talk on one topic. I know people have got a lot to say but we're going to restrict it and try and keep to the times today. So if we can start from your end, Snuki, and just choose the one topic that's most important to you to reply on.

**MR ZIKALALA:** One thing to answer what Phil has said and also what I said in my presentation, that the difference between the national and the public interest is a very short distance, very, very short, because what's happening in Parliament, it's of national interest and it's also public interest. That is why we, as the SABC, have taken a conscious decision to report more on Parliament, because Parliament is where legislation is made in the interests of the public at large. And it's in Parliament where decisions are made, decisions that affect ordinary people's lives and even business life and government's administration. So it is a very, very short distance, the difference between national and public.

But we, as a public broadcaster, the role that we have to play is to ensure that the public is fully informed about what's happening within the whole country itself. That's why, as the SABC, we have ten regional offices so that the nation can speak to itself. People in KwaZulu-Natal must know what's happening in the Northern Province. People in Northern Province must know what's happening - oh Limpopo, it's called Limpopo; thank you. So that's why we're a national broadcaster, to serve the interests of the public itself. And so it is a very, very short distance, the difference between the two.

On the question - I think that's the only question that came through the SABC and the question I would applaud our colleague here for, for having recognised that as the SABC we are making an effort to ensure that the deaf people do understand what's happening within the country and also globally. We have taken your matter seriously in terms of international sign language. Phil is here, he is in charge of SABC Africa. I'll ask you to discuss that with him because we'll be launching SABC Africa as a 24-hour news channel, news and current affairs channel.

So I think it's important that, that aspect Phil has to look into. And it's good that you said that in front of the Board that's going to be one of my goals and my CEO is looking at me. And so if it

doesn't happen it means that I lose my job because we have a very strict Board which has the interest of the public at large, especially the poor and those who were previously disadvantaged. The Board is very conscious of that and so we'll look into that. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you, Snuki. Console?

**MR THLEANE:** Thanks. Let me answer the last question asked about community media. No, no, it's not like I'm afraid of the SABC ... (interjection)

**MR ZIKALALA:** Actually, he's a new FXI person, it has changed completely. He has changed the whole FXI.

**MR THLEANE:** Snuki, I didn't hear that! Okay. Well, I just mentioned it because of the fact that the SABC is one of the hosts and then there's a heavy SABC presence. But you'd know, for instance people from the NCRF would know that I personally have done a lot of work on community radio. In fact let me take this opportunity to do a bit of self-advertising. I'll be publishing a book in January/February on community media, and community radio in particular and that is one of the questions that we look into, that indeed, just like it happens at local government level, provincial level, there is a need for us to begin reflecting on the state of freedom of expression in relation to community radio, because there are two things amongst many others that I picked up.

The first one is commercial pressures on community radio. Unlike your bigger media houses that are able to resist those pressures, community radio is almost at the mercy of advertisers, be they national advertisers or local advertisers, your local shops and all that, even local municipalities who would put a lot of pressure on community radio to kind of toe the line.

The second form of pressure that is made to bear on community radio is political pressure. Like you rightly say, in the rural areas from the Chiefs who would want to dictate somehow because a pattern that they use is to firstly be very active, and you know as pioneers of community radio in a rural area you welcome the participation of the Chief, and once the Chief or his or her representative is very much active, that activeness or participation is invariably accompanied by some form of dictating the terms, what the station can report or cannot report about the village in general, about the Royal House in particular, and all that. So you have a very tricky situation where the community radio needs the support of the Chief, but on the other hand it comes up with a lot of conditions.

The same happens with local municipalities because you find that in some cases the council would offer community radio premises for free and community radio would welcome that because they do not have the resources, but those kind of resources, it can be in the form of electricity rebates, it can be in the form of free rental space and all that, come up with conditions that the station would have to report almost everything that the council wants it to report without having that editorial independence. So those are some of the challenges that are there.

But I will still add that together with public broadcasting, community media, particularly community radio is one media that people on the ground can claim as theirs because it is not in private hands. For PBS it's in the broader public hands and for community radio it's in the broader community hand.

**MR MAKHANYA:** Okay, I think I'll answer Thami's question about integrity of newspapers. Obviously that is one of the biggest strong points of any publication, any media institution, its integrity, that's what we're about, I mean we go about the truth, and publishing a retraction is not something that should - it is humiliating obviously because you are saying to your reader and to the general public and to the subject that you got it wrong. But I agree with you, it enhances your respect among your readers and members of the public, and it's not something that you should resist if you know that you got it wrong.

I think most newspapers that I know in this town and in this country generally do print retractions quite quickly and I mean, like after obviously they have proof that they were wrong. Like I think you can't just simply say because the subject said you were wrong, you obviously have to do your own homework. You have to trust the reporter and if the reporter cannot prove to you that you are wrong then obviously you will print the retraction and most newspapers - I disagree with you that people hide retractions, generally most newspapers print their retractions on page 2 and 3 and it's not difficult to find the retractions on those pages.

If the issue is a lot more serious, then obviously it deserves more prominence and then again, like it's up to the individual editor to determine that. I can't speak on behalf of other editors but I mean, like the newspaper that I work for, both during my editorship and previous editorships, we have grovelled very prominently to people kind of like when we have got things very wrong, and it has been done. And again, once you have done that, as you said, it enhances your standing and you give people, when it's necessary, you give people right of response and the honourable Mr Mazwai here has had right of response in the Sunday Times both to issues that affected the SABC and affected issues kind of like nationally. As far as I know I think it is a principle that editors who are members of the South African National Editors Forum, it's a principle that we do hold dear that in order to be trusted we should give people that right of response.

But when it comes to reading a story back to the subject or giving a story - look I'm really fundamentalist about it. If it is going to - it's a question of kind of like the facts and so on, it's not something that you should necessarily stand in the way but it's not something that kind of like that you make a habit. People demand that journalists do that all the time about inconsequential things and because you were given a one paragraph quote in a story, therefore you want to be given the story back to you and it must be read back to you. Obviously if it's going to enhance the accuracy of the story it's something that you, as the editor, make the call on that matter. So it's not a question of principle that you should always do that and it's a question that individual editors make their call on that and it's made on individual stories and as the subject arises.

But I will disagree with the notion that generally South African media do not give people the right of reply and that the South African media do not print retractions in prominent places. I think we do, do so and I think it's something that any editor that you speak to will stand by.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you Mondli. Joel the last minute.

**MR NETSHITENZHE:** Very briefly. In agreeing with Thami I think its issues of accountability, integrity and legitimacy and the media should be concerned about the issue of legitimacy. It's not just a question of whether people buy newspapers or watch programmes. They might watch for amusement. The question is whether they believe what they see.

Then on the issue of the ANC winning elections, I will speak here on behalf of government, but I think a suggestion that democracy is a threat to democracy is ludicrous, in my view. People should have a choice. And perhaps it's also a reflection of some of the issues that might have arisen in yesterday's discussion. When a party in Africa is strong in free and fair elections, it succeeds, we then say it's a threat to democracy. When the social democrats in Sweden rule for 30 years, when Margaret Thatcher rules for 25 years, we say they are strong people. So we need I think to examine our own paradigms.

Lastly, on national and public interest, in a state that is truly democratic with a participatory democracy and which is truly legitimate, there should be very little difference between the public and the national interest.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you very much. We've not got 20 minutes for tea time and I would like to say happy Media Freedom Day. We'll see you back at half past.

**TEA BREAK**

**SESSION TWO:**

**BALANCING INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND ENTERTAINMENT:  
WHAT IS THE RIGHT MIX?  
HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?**

=====  
CHAIRPERSON: THABO LSHILO  
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**CHAIRPERSON:** Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much and welcome to what I think promises to be the most interesting sessions of the conference. I was a bit hesitant to accept the invitation to chair this one because of some misunderstanding that I, on reading what the topic is about, balancing information, education and entertainment, we know that if it's a good newspaper or medium, we always have been taught that good newspapers have a good balance of these things, can entertain, can educate, can inform. And I work on the newspaper that does a lot of entertaining or in my newspapers do a lot of entertaining and also a lot of education as well.

The importance of education on a newspaper would be best illustrated, I think, by what happens at the Sowetan. The Sowetan has 1.45 million readers daily, but there's an education section which has more than 2 million readers which just serves to show the importance of education for a newspaper. We also know that a lot of other newspapers use what is called "newspaper in education copies," which unfortunately sometimes they just use them just to boost circulation, dump newspapers at schools and reflect them as sold copies. It looks good on ABC figures. We don't do much of that at the Sowetan but we also used to train people on how to use those newspapers in education. So education is a very, very crucial part of a newspaper in that sense, and also in the sense that a newspaper must also be educational.

The idea is that given the challenges of this country of ours which is developing, we cannot shy away from playing an education role as a newspaper in spite of the other things that we do which some just dismiss as just titillating and entertainment. But I think today, Francis will give us a much more intelligent take on the subject of what is a good balance between education, entertainment and information for a newspaper. And then what we can do, we have to try to avoid this degenerating into yet another unhelpful attack on tabloids.

Since we have actually accepted, and Joel, you said a very good thing for us that there should be an acceptance that we are here to stay and just to make one point that we are not here to live up to your expectations and we are here to live up to our own expectations. You may like us or may not like us but we are here to stay. We are a factor in the newspaper field in the country and that tabloids have added the most excitement in recent times in the media.

I mean, we have a newspaper - we never existed a few years ago, but sells more than 350 000 copies and we have the Sowetan which was dying just 13 months ago but has added 40 000 copies to its circulation, all bought for copies no funny sales. Maybe that should help to circulate debate; we can take it up some other time.

Let me introduce my guests and my Panel. Ferial Haffajee, probably the editor who has come most under attack in recent times in the country. I mean, she's been kept very, very busy, she can't afford to sleep at night because of interdicts. She can't afford to just sleep at night because, I mean, she may be dragged out of bed to try to defend a newspaper, being interdicted.

Professor Francis is an associate professor at CODOSSRIA, tell us what that is.

**PROF NYAMNJOH:** Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you very much, sir. Mandla Langa, you know, who needs no introduction, we all know Mandla. Professor Tuwana Kupe from Wits University, a journalism teacher and Ferial, as you know, is the Editor of the Mail and Guardian. Over to you, Prof.

**PROF FRANCIS MYAMNJOH**  
**Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa**

Thanks a lot. It's a pleasure for me to be part of this important conference on media freedom. When I was invited I hesitated and when the invitation insisted, I decided to come to share with you some of the material on our forthcoming book titled "Insiders and Outsiders: Citizenship and Xenophobia in Contemporary Southern Africa." It is a due to be released in January.

In the book I try to examine the inadequacy of the nation state framework within which most of the discussion this morning has been articulated. In a world where we are constantly moving around so fast, when we are told that the freedom of circulation is the defining order, the nation state as a basket of boundaries and confinements becomes subjected to scrutiny. One of the ways I thought I should address the issue of balanced information, education and entertainment is to look at the hierarchies, both national and international under which the nation state and the media operate, and how such hierarchies affect their aspirations towards balanced information, education and entertainment.

I thought I should do that under one of the labels that you gave this conference; ideology. Of course we have always - we've grown up, attracted to a dominant idea of ideology as forced consciousness, but my argument is that if we limited ideology only to this notion of false consciousness we would be underestimating the abilities of ordinary people in any given context to think for themselves, and to be able to make informed choices. So much as ideology might be forced consciousness, there's another dimension to it, there must be some truth in it.

So we could say that if the media, whether national or international, are vehicles of ideologies or vehicles of forced consciousness, they can only succeed as such if there is some measure of truth if that forced consciousness is palatable to those that they address. If they are able to swallow it, if people are able to buy into it and if you are buying into it, it is because there must be some element of truth either through the representations that you have acquired through the socialisation, political, cultural and otherwise, or simply because your common sense dictates that my predicament in life must be explained by this statement.

Now just a few examples on ideology. I can reassure you that I'm going to talk just picking here and there, but the paper, the chapter that I'm addressing, I made a photocopy of it for the SABC which you could copy if you like, and it's titled "Mobility, Citizenship and Xenophobia in South Africa," as part of my overall study of this phenomenon in Southern Africa.

I'll make a quick word on ideology. When I was studying as a student in the UK in the mid '80s, to make ends meet I used to work as a security guard, those people who come at night. As a foreign student that was the only way I qualified to earn any money, and I would go out at night and watch building sites and so on. One the people I worked with was a 65-year old man who had lost all his teeth. He was English but whenever we listened to the news together, he would be very critical of Neil Kinnock and the Labour Party, and he said Neil Kinnock would be the most dangerous thing to happen if he were to take over power in this country. Then Margaret Thatcher was flex and strong.

What amazed me in this old man was how he could think that a labour government could possibly be worse off for him than his predicament that he was already involved in. He was working as a security guard earning £2.50. I, as a student, with other ambitions could afford to

be devalued as labour that much, but I couldn't imagine him to be satisfied with the situation. Yet he was defending Margaret Thatcher's conservative government. And I thought that was very informing, that ideology could push you into certain positions where certain dominant views are sold even to the greatest victims of the status quo or the establishment. That was interesting.

But it's not always every ideology that gets prominence, to which media gives prominent coverage or that gets a proper ... in the way that even ordinary victims can be affected by it. I will take another example from Cameroon. If you know Cameroon well it's a bilingual republic with the Francophones as the dominant force in the Republic. And Anglophones in Cameroon are very, very critical of the Francophone dominated state, and as underlings, they have tended to blame anything on the Francophones. So there was a colleague when I was teaching at the University of Buea in Cameroon, he's a PhD but he used to blame every failure on the Francophones. And one day we were driving to the beach and a goat rushed across the road and I told him, I bet that it must be a Francophone goat, and of course he said if you look carefully it might be a Francophone goat.

So you see, when you are the situation of victim-hood your own representations of the world are also ideological but unfortunately they don't have the power of expression that the dominant representations get offered by the media, and also by the sheer fact that societies live in hierarchies. The hierarchies are informed by race, they are informed by geography, they are informed by gender. They are informed, like we heard this morning from our colleague who is deaf, they are informed also by language. Which language gets prioritised by the media can inform - it enhances these hierarchies that we all are subjected to. So when we are discussing the media in any setting we should see how these various hierarchies affect the way media coverage is made possible or absent in any given context.

Now, because you invited me from a very long distance, Senegal, and I said I cannot come here to discuss matters which you muster a lot, I can only try to bring an external element to your debate, and I thought what best could I bring here. I thought that maybe I should discuss the media society and the *makwerekwere* in South Africa and it's the *makwerekwere* that captures me a lot. The *makwerekwere* here, if you're talking about balanced information and balanced entertainment and balanced education, and one way to look at the South African media, one would wonder the extent to which the *makwerekwere*, as undesired outsiders, are given coverage and what sort of coverage; what sort of information gets communicated about them? What sort of education and entertainment about the *makwerekwere* is observed.

Given that if you look at the statistics of migration into South Africa, it's not every migrant that gets policed. It is a particular type of migrant who South Africans have come to describe as the *makwerekwere* and I will read just one paragraph from this place for you to see what this study is all about:

"The *makwerekwere* means different things in different contexts, but as used in South Africa it means not only a black person who cannot demonstrate mastery of local South African languages but also one who hails from a country assumed to be economically and culturally backwards in relation to South Africa.

With reference to civilisation the *makwerekwere* would qualify as the *homo codatis*, the tail man, the cave man, the primitives, the savages, the barbarians or the Hottentots of modern times; those who inspired these nomenclatures in Southern African attempting to graduate from naked savagery into the realm of citizenship.

In terms of skin pigmentation the racial hierarchy of humanity under apartheid comes into play as *makwerekwere* are believed to be the darkest of the dark-skinned and to be less enlightened, even when more educated than the light-skinned South African blacks. *Makwerekwere* are also thought to come from distant locations in the remotest corners of the hearts of darkness, north of the Limpopo, (It's significant that the University of

Limpopo is here, so north of that university), but which South Africans in their modernity know little and are generally not interested to discover except to continue the civilised admission of harkening to the call of the heart of darkness, be gone by European missionaries and the colonies in Southern Africa in the 17th century.

It is hardly surprising therefore that despite their small numbers, some of the most virulent prejudice has been directed against black Africans from countries north of the Limpopo, by mostly South African blacks. According to surveys, only 25% to 30% of black South Africans are consistently more generous in attitude and approach to *makwerekwere*. Once in a while a *makwerekwere* country might distinguish itself positively through their football prowess, a game which South African blacks adore. But in general, news of them is about the darker side of humanity; civil wars, genocides, AIDS, dictatorship, corruption, crime and other forms of savagery which do not become a civilised state with civilised nationals.

*Makwerekwere* hail from the sorts of places no South African in his or her right mind would want to penetrate without being fortified with bottles of mineral water, mosquito repellent creams and extra thick condoms. In short, *makwerekwere* and modernisation are like a clash of night and day. Suddenly having to face an influx of primitive darkness in the urban spaces of the new South Africa could be quite disturbing; indeed, a nightmare from the past for South African blacks eager to prove their modernity and harvest the benefits of full citizenship for long mystified by whiteness.

These dangers posed by the darkness of unharnessed Africa, that is Africa devoid of a history of settler European modernity, demonstrate the need to police the borders of South Africa and keep the barbarians or stutterers at bay with tough immigration policies and even tougher attitudes, just as under apartheid."

Now I thought I should address this issue so you see when if we put information balance, balance of education and entertainment too narrowly within the confines of a nation state only and its citizens, we miss out on those who fall through the crevices and one of those who have fallen through the crevices in this case is the *makwerekwere*. But also in this study I addressed the issue of Indian South Africans who run a very great risk of falling through the crevices as well when the hierarchies to whom the land really belongs comes into play, and black South Africans, especially those in KwaZulu-Natal, they want to claim the true position of sons of daughters of the soil, and that is well epitomised by Mbongeni Ngema's *Amandiya* which you know about. So I thought that I should address this issue. There may be questions how did South African media seek balance of information, education and entertainment by relating to these communities that are at the margins of your citizenship concerns. Thank you very much.

**CHAIRPERSON:** I think we'll have enough time to come back to the other things that you would have wanted to say. The panellists will have ten minutes each. Prof Kupe?

**PANELLIST**  
**Tuwana Kupe,**  
**School of Journalism, Wits University**

I was hoping I was going to be the last, then I would say I agree with Mandla, I agree with Ferial, I agree with Francis; fortunately not.

I didn't like this topic, to be quite frank with you, when I was given the topic because I didn't quite understand it but when I got to start writing about it I thought that, that was the best topic so I was put in the right place.

First, I think that since only ten minutes has been given to me by the Chair, it will be useless for me to cut across all media, so I'm also going to focus just on the SABC as a public broadcaster

than to discuss the topic before me. The reason why I do so is that as a person and ideologically my default stations when it comes to broadcasting is for the public broadcaster whatever country I live in. I normally don't watch private broadcasters but this is an ideological prejudice precisely because you see, immediately you talk about the public broadcaster you situate yourself within a broader community and a diverse community.

And strictly speaking, if you are talking in an African context and in a South African context about a society in transition, is that you are trying to build a diverse society made up of different publics coming from a divided past because of a history of colonialism, apartheid and so on. And if you don't situate yourself within that, you lose the capacity to be able to part of a new society that add ideas to certain values. So also specifically speaking in a South African context we have formally at least, if you look at the founding document and I think I must acknowledge where I got this phrase from, from the gentleman sitting right at the back, Joel Netshitenzhe, I've read things where he talks about the founding document, founding settlement.

Actually what he means, he means the Constitution, formally, at least speaking. The South African Constitution is heard as one of the best in the world and I think that whether you agree or disagree you cannot disagree that embodied within that document, or shall we say the founding settlement or founding document, is a set of values both universal and specific to South Africa and to the world, that one would want to aspire to; whether it's human rights, socio-economic rights, protections for the media and what kind of society you aspire to be, so that is very critically important. Constitutions are by nature public documents and they talk about public and citizenship.

So I'm going to use the SABC as an example in order to address this question. I would like to start off from the premise that to me, public service broadcasting is based on three major principles; there are many others, but three: First, I think it's a commitment to and the practice of balanced programming. In other words once you call yourself a public service broadcaster, balanced programming is not an option, it's what you have to do. You commit to it and you see it in the South African Broadcasting Act and in ICASA stipulations, regulations and so on that balanced programming is a requirement. In fact, if the SABC, for example, doesn't do balanced programming they then turn themselves into pirate stations which would be shut down by ICASA.

Second I think a public service broadcaster does something that is different from a commercial and private broadcaster, this is why I don't really like them. The public service broadcaster ideally delivers programmes to audiences, whereas commercial broadcasters normally, they do that as well, but the overarching principle around them is that they deliver audiences to advertisers, then they do the programmes later on. That principle, for me, is that a public service broadcaster is the public's own organisation, it speaks to them and speaks for them, and if you are talking about a public in this diverse and new society in the making, you're not getting a dialogical situation where participatory democracy, as well as development, becomes a real possibility.

So in addition to this question I would then like to say the following: That the question of the right mix and right balance is not only a quantitative issue. It is also an issue based on those principles where you ask the question, what is the overarching editorial and programming strategy which will then underpin information related, education related and entertainment related programming. Because without that overarching editorial and programming strategy things are then very much disjointed. And I think that let me be controversial enough to say that if you take the totality of South African media as well as the rest of African media, there is a lack of that overarching editorial and programming strategy.

The consciousness to say, what am I doing and what is my role and where am I locating myself in the national framework, in the regional framework and in the global framework, that is lacking, it's lacking across the spectrum including the newspapers. So I think that we should deal with

that question about information and education in that way.

Then I would like also to see that the principles, these three principles then mean that for a public service broadcaster there must be a diversity of programmes as well as a diversity of programme genres. Let me take entertainment as an example. One is not only referring to news and current affairs, one is also looking at live and recorded debates. One is also looking at the coverage of live events. A cursory glance at the SABC's schedule, for example, shows that while we have news and current affairs they are fairly limited in quantity as well as to some extent in quality, I might not get the time to talk about this, and hear I'm not talking about Snuki or whatever journalists who didn't cover whatever. I'm talking at the broader overarching ideological level.

We hear of news and current affairs especially if you look at television, of a very limited nature which is driven by advertising, so the main news bulletin is literally 18 minutes or 19 minutes and seeks in those 18 and 19 minutes to cover all of South Africa including all the nine provinces; the SADC region, the African region and the world. What can you conceivably do in those?

Then there is the late night show which is really more of a news show than a proper news bulletin, when it comes to current affairs, there's a lack as well. When it comes to live debates and live coverage of events there is a total lack of that and I think that one is then denied the diversity of programming and the balance within that context.

So what I'm also saying is that when we address this question about balance we must also look at within the aforementioned genre itself, is there a balance and range of programming and genres. Then if you get into the news bulletins we know the usual complaints. We know also that we're at a very early stage. It's only recently that we have bulletins in all the nine official languages but those bulletins are not actually satisfactory as well. I have a student of mine who we are working on looking at just the isiZulu News Bulletin on SABC1. We have decided to call our study "isiZulu in the News," rather than isiZulu News; precisely because there's so much English in there. There is a cover, a veneer of Zulu from the presenter, so really this bulletin has isiZulu in the news, it's not an isiZulu bulletin.

This has been so recognised by government itself and others that now we are rolling out two more channels to deal with that problem, so that we then in a sense sort of try and exile English. I doubt whether that is necessarily the route that one needs to go and whether one will achieve the same effect.

So also when it comes to the news bulletins, one is also talking about the balance, the right balance in relation to diversity of topics, issues, views and opinions of South Africans. In 18 minutes this is very, very hard to do that kind of diversity of topics, views and also of South Africa itself. When you experience the news bulletin, the main news bulletins, the tendency is a bias towards certain geographic areas, and a huge gap in between. Sometimes the news bulletin leaps from Pretoria to Johannesburg to Cape Town, then there's nothing in between, except that when a weekend comes that 'in between' suffers a disaster, then it shows up in the news. Again a lack of an overarching editorial strategy that says this is South Africa being presented to South Africans.

When it comes to education, again I have a problem with the SABC, not because they don't do any education, they have very solid educational products. SABC Education headed by my friend, Dr Ihron Rensburg, does a solid job and he actually promotes it very, very well. But I think that when one is talking about education and media in a society in transition, one is talking about educational programmes relating to - of a formal nature. In other words, programmes relating to the established curriculum and whether you know in the primary school system, high school system or the university system, you find it in the newspapers where they do matric maths and stuff like that.

I think that is fairly good but I think that it is a requirement in the Broadcasting Act and ICASA Regulations that there must be educational programmes of an informal nature and here really lies a gap. And because that education of an informal nature to me relates fundamentally to an understanding that formal education as we have it today bears the imprint of colonialism and apartheid. It's a formal education system that actually does not produce critical citizens who are located within South Africa, Africa and the rest of the world. It tends to be a very bookish education, a very academic education, precisely because it's dislocated in many ways. The language of instruction is often not the mother-tongue instruction.

I saw a big article in The Star yesterday where people were still debating whether it's better or not. I think educationists concluded a long time ago that it is better to use mother-tongue instruction because some people are still debating this matter. There are too many professors hanging around. So if you ask yourself that question, then where are the educational programmes of an informal nature, using our own languages, understanding the fact that we have a history of education as well before formal colonial education took over and that education of a bookish nature is not the only education that you can actually have.

So one here is talking about an education that will produce critical and analytical and reflective consciousness about yourself as a South African, as a Southern African, as an African, and part of the world. And such an education to me would then enable South Africans to engage with the following things: What does it mean to be an African in a globalising world? What does the African Renaissance mean? Is it just a slogan that you chant around or do you critically engage with the African Renaissance? What is this thing that is called NEPAD, the AU, SADC and so on.

Among the students that I teach in a number of courses are students often coming from the rest of the SADC region and even beyond. I start my lectures with a quiz about very basic things about Southern Africa. I ask them the fact whether, for example, in Southern Africa we are not so rich in terms of economic resources, that we should actually be better off from what is happening now. Then I ask them to list the mineral resources and everything. They often forget that Angola is one of the most well endowed countries in our region. Oil, diamonds, good agricultural land which is not being used because there are landmines and people have been maimed and so on, they don't know all that.

Now quite clearly the formal education system is not delivering what it should. If we look to the media in the manner in which they report news, current affairs and other documentaries, to be able to create the South African, Southern African and African consciousness in the global context so that you produce that kind of citizen that is participating in a transitional society, and imbibing those values that are in the founding settlement. You also then see that because you don't have this kind of educational programming that provokes citizens to be critical, there's poor engagement with national programmes, whether they agree with them or not, not like Black Economic Empowerment. In the newspapers particularly there's a swing between Black Economic Empowerment as a self-management scheme for the elite and some concession that it might have something to do with redistributing and creating wealth and developing skills and harnessing all the resources that you have; one doesn't actually then see that.

So there is a failure therefore to produce people who are South African citizens as well as African citizens but also who are wealthy and therefore knowledgeable and I think that we need to address that. When it comes to entertainment I think the word has become misleading in itself for many reasons because entertainment then is seen as mindless stuff, the stuff that you don't have to think about, but I think in a very complex way entertainment is much more linked to education and information, but is a distinct category.

Because I think there is entertainment of a mindless type and we see it from 9.00 pm onwards across the SABC channels, when all the American police dramas and other things flood the schedule. And there's no difference now between SABC1, 2 and 3 because I mean it's a choice

of police dramas and other American dramas after the local programmes have been exhausted. Now that is really entertainment of a mindless kind. Perhaps it does teach us something about Americans which might relate to what is happening to Iraq and what they do in Iraq, but there is a complexity to the Americans as well which, if you choose carefully some of the entertainment programming, would give you another perspective of the diversity of America itself.

So I would think that entertainment is not about just escapism, it is also based to relax and de-stress you but also it gives you different perspectives from a different way by exploring issues from the point of view of feelings, fantasies, emotions and we do experience phenomena from that kind of thing and it is important to do that. But also, entertainment is the core of creativity. Any society, including a transitional society, cannot be a fully faced society if you cannot explore innovation and creativity through entertainment, and I'm talking about the broad range of genres, drama, comedy and so on.

I don't understand why we have such limited comedy in our languages on television, for example. The only thing that ever comes to mind which I try and catch is Dube on Tuesday or Dube on Thursday or whatever but what about Khumalo on Friday or Netshitenzhe on Saturday, in that language as well. But I do realise that there is quite a lot of American comedy and English comedy on the SABC schedule and comedy is a very interesting way of exploring people's way of relating to each other; things that make them laugh, and also exploring their social norms because in comedy you learn what not to do and what not to do by doing the wrong thing and being laughed at, and humour is a very democratic thing in its own right.

So what he is also talking precisely about is the creation of new identities and moulding new cultures in a transitional society and culture and identity is critical to confidence. One thing that we, as Africans, lack on the world and global stage is the confidence to be ourselves, precisely because we're really conflicted about our identities and cultures, because our media systems are not part of that process of promoting, preserving and being a platform for creating new cultural identities that link with our democratic aspirations in our developmental aspirations.

Also fundamentally this is very dangerous because it is an economic dimension that undermines us. All the audio visual programmes that we import elsewhere cost us money as well, apart from costing us cultural confidence and identity confidence, and so we're exporting money that we actually need and then undermining ourselves and undermining our own economic programmes and then walking around looking like mini- me Americans.

Now again here one is talking about the need for a conscious overarching programming strategy which says, if I have information, education and entertainment what is my overall aim and how and where do these things link and de-link? Because there's a tendency now also for infotainment, especially in newspapers, as information, and edutainment, that's the only of doing education. And I think that is the negative influence that you get from advertising.

Let me end, Mr Chair, because I'm really annoying you now. The right balance is then when the SABC programming is experienced by South Africans getting a diversity of information, getting a lifelong education for sustainable livelihoods in a changing country and world, and laughing at each other and together without fighting breaking out.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON:** I think that it will be appropriate to get a perspective from print media on the topic. Ferial?

**PANELLIST**  
**Ms Ferial Haffajee,**  
**Editor: Mail and Guardian**

Thank you very much for the opportunity of talking to you today, I've been looking forward to it. I thought that I might go back to the grassroots for a bit and take you back to the SABC of the early 90s when it was newly democratised. Many of us print people were making tracks for this exciting medium for the liberated airwaves where we could never have worked before. They were quite heady days. Tim Modise was being weaned from Radio Bop onto television screens. Foreign broadcasters were deployed here to rapidly teach us the arts of splicing, cutting, the sound bite, and telling it in pictures.

One of those foreign teachers asked a class of us newbie's: So what's the function of journalism? I was about to pipe-up, as my editor Anton Harber had taught me, "to change the world, of course", when Putco Mofane in that booming voice of his, said that "it's to inform, educate and entertain". A pat easy answer, the teacher beamed, the class started, and so it went on. For me, this neat compartmentalisation of our function in the world has never sat very easily. It is too pat, too easy, too un-ambitious. Of course, all journalism must do all three and if it's done well, then it will do it in about equal mixture. But in a democracy and in a new and a cool one at that, like ours, it's a set of pigeon holes, too lacking in imagination to do a country like ours justice.

What then should we be doing more of in the 21st century? If I may for a moment set the cat among the hacks and look at why a seminal conference like this one is debating yesterday's ideas instead of tomorrows. I was wondering whether we really need to still be talking about our role in a democracy. After 11 years I think we should know that by now. And then do we really still need to be talking about a post-colonial paradigm?

As a working journalist challenged by this very exciting country, I want to be talking about how to cover its complexity and nuance, because I don't think we do that enough. I want to be talking about its victories and its challenges; how to tell the stories of officialdom and those of the grassroots; how to cover this continent on a shoestring, because it is a shoestring; how to write about the new South Africans, Professor, who have begun to call this home, how not to call them *Makwerekwere*, how to capture their lives and their difficulties with the complexity and the nuance; how to cover corruption, which President Mbeki in the past six months has referred to in at least nine speeches, he's called it a cancer besetting our country.

There's absolutely nothing unpatriotic about writing these ills, about fore-shining the light of exposure because I think that will make our country stronger. If we accept that, then we have to accept that our role has to go beyond mere educating and informing. We have to be entertaining and influential, too, perhaps even muck-raking, but I know that's controversial one, as I found to my great peril at the Mail and Guardian.

It surprised me yesterday to hear the SANEF Chairperson, my brother Joe, saying that we was surprised by the AMS survey and how it shows that most South African exist, most black South Africans exist in LSM 1 to 4 which is right at the bottom of society. That figure, every year since 1994 the AMS survey has revealed the same thing, that the mass of the poor are still black and that they are getting poorer. Yes, an exciting black middle-class is buying cars and houses at a pace fast enough to stimulate what seems to be quite a lengthy consumer boom, but for most black people in South Africa our country is still a dream deferred, if you look at economics, at least.

I wonder why we often report this as an aha moment, why we only come back to it every so often. I wonder whether we're so entrenched in our class positions that we report from our comforts instead of from the challenges of the country. If we were doing our jobs better then I think our unemployment would be seen as the national crisis it is. We would treat it as

joblessness is treated by the German media. There it's on front pages almost every day. Here we do it when the labour force survey is released and then perhaps not even.

It would be lovely to embed in Lusikisiki and in Tzaneen, even in Orange Farm, to tell these stories. We would not only go there when the President perhaps has an Imbizo. For me, this has been our key media failing of the past 11 years. It's been our failure to make crises of our crises and to make molehills of our mountains. Those of us who work in the private sector have suffered at the rough end of owners who largely, and there are notable exceptions, run newsrooms down to the bone. The best journalists have been kicked-up to Mahogany Row, others fill the offices of the Bua News Agency, Joel, we've noticed.

Press conferences and parachute journalism is the order of the day, again with notable exception. So the democratised SABC has been perfectly placed to fill the gap. It's got offices in places where others of us editors can only dream of. Its journalists speak all the 11 tongues of our nation and then some too. Its got resources and most of all it's got the power of the medium; radio, television, these are the mediums of the masses. I think it's opportune at a conference like this to look at whether the SABC has risen to the challenge of the freedom years. Has it used its resources and its language to capture the flavour of a changing nation? In large measure, yes, I would argue. One hears Mercedes Besent in the Northern Cape, reporting from far flung corners, telling stories that I would weep to have in our newspaper.

I hear Rene Horn providing a very different and a fresh perspective from Baghdad. I hear John Perlman and Nikiwe Bikitsha hold power up to a scrutiny in a way so far removed from the appalling interviews of a Cliff Saunders era, that it irks me when people mention that the SABC has returned to that awful era; certainly it has not. Yet I also often watch the 7.00 pm news bulletin, that's the flagship one, and it's often a chore rather than a joy. Now I know many people may say that about reading the Mail and Guardian but the SABC is a different kettle of fish, it is the public broadcaster. I think often the bulletin producers are airing on the side of an official and a very limited agenda given the richness of the resources which the SABC has.

If this is the prism through which they're viewing the country and the prism through we, the hacks of the middle-class, are viewing it, we will be surprised by the depth of poverty as captured in our national statistics as they're released to us every so often. But more worryingly is that we will be surprised when Harrismith explodes, as we were, many of us were caught on the back-foot, we had to head out there, we were not right there.

We'll be surprised when next year voter turnout in the Vaal dips to two in ten of eligible adults, as its likely to, and we'll be more surprised when people get so hell-in that the N2 in Cape Town begins to look like the old days, burning tyres, acrid smoke. It looked that way quite recently. We journalists should be there anticipating, telling the stories of that frustration so it doesn't take us by surprise.

Being a broadcaster of record is too often confused as being a broadcaster of government record. One more ministerial press conference sometimes has got me reaching for the remote and I'm sure it has you too. The SABC is often a target of such critique because it is big and it is powerful, but mostly because it is ours, it's publicly owned, unlike the M&G or other newspapers which of course need to be publicly criticised. But the SABC is an anomaly of a completely different size and of societal impact, so I think such scrutiny is important.

If there's a huge lesson, our challenges as journalists are numerous in writing and in broadcasting, but for me the biggest challenge is that of sexiness, to ensure that our listeners and our readers don't reach for the remote or turn the page. If there is a huge lesson which the tabloid generation has revealed to us in the past ten years, it is the obligation to be funky and to be sexy in all that we do, to be compelling and to be entertaining. We're talking to and we're writing for old audiences and the SMS generation who have so many sources of information, education and entertainment means that journalism is a choice for them and that poses very,

very big challenges for those of us in this craft.

It's a challenging generation of young citizens, these people who we need to get interested in journalism, for whom yesterday's debates matter very little. Colonialism, I think often that they hardly even remember apartheid. Their patriotism, their attention, their citizenship must be one, and that's our very key challenge. It's a generation which will alter fundamentally the role of media in society in the next ten years. So I thought that at next year's conference, Mr Mazwai, perhaps we shouldn't have old fuddy duddies like me sitting here and talking, but to have Swashwe on the panel, I think you'd like that, Thabo; or perhaps the producers of Street Journal, that excellent programme on SABC, the News Editor of YFM. We need to mix it up and get those new young voices to tell us the role of media in society.

Thank you very much.

**CHAIRPERSON:** I think I'll definitely consider bringing Swashwe next year. Mr Langa?

**PANELLIST**  
**Mr Mandla Langa**

Chairperson, thank you very much for chairing this. I'd like to thank the SABC and the partners that have organised this conference, SANEF and the University of Limpopo. I think this is very, very important and you can't have too much of this so I'm hoping that it happens soon again, next year, I hear.

The topic was Balancing Information, Education and Entertainment: What's new? What's the right mix? How much is too much. And I thought that since I'm making a presentation on this it will just be very discursive, I'll just be throwing points possibly without any real coherent programmatic structure just to try and elicit as much comment as possible. And since I'm not longer commenting from a regulatory perspective I think the controversy will come out.

A long time ago when I was in fact in another galaxy, when I was a young man in KwaMashu, our main source of information was the radio. There were newspapers but the radio was the main source of information. I think that fact hasn't changed today, it's still radio that people listen to or as their main source of information. And there came a programme in Zulu which started at 9.30 in the morning. K E Masinga used to be the first Zulu voice I heard or African voice I heard coming out of a box, and we believed, one man told us, who used to be a chimney sweep in our house, told us that black people had actually been created by God at 9.30 in the morning and I believed that for a long time.

There were newspapers. At first I couldn't read so we just looked at the cartoons; Mickey Mouse. And much, much later when I tried to draw cartoons and give them to the Banner News Agency they told me that the only cartoons they accept are cartoons which are syndicated from the King Features Syndicate in the United states, there are no cartoons that are South African that they wanted to see or could accept. I hope that has changed, that there are many more cartoonists now of indigenous bent.

But there was also the grapevine which was quite powerful. There was no TV then in South Africa at that time because Hertzog in his wisdom thought that TV would prove very injurious to the sensitivities of the people of South Africa, especially in terms of the Christian Nationalism and Calvinism and that TV might also give ideas to black people in terms of aspiring for things that were happening in other countries, and thence ferment a potential revolution.

If Hertzog had fast forwarded to today he would have said to himself that he need not have worried because the cacophony that sometimes can be said to be coming out of television, and I'm using television in a collective form covering all the broadcasters in this country, Hertzog would have said that this cacophony does not for him provide any real threat. Because it is my

belief that to date there is still a need for a lot of work to be done to position television in a manner where it is part and parcel and pushes the frontiers for societal development.

We have information and the previous speakers have touched on some aspects of this I think very charged topic. We have news and current affairs. There is still something that needs to happen there. I remember when 9/11 - September 11 took place and there were voices that wanted to express how they felt, and the programme that was fortuitously at that moment beaming what people were feeling about 9/11 and what 9/11 meant for South Africa was SAFM and of course 702, just to name two programmes that were being broadcast then.

And there were voices in this country that tried to phone, and one person said: "Can I speak in Setswana," and they said "no, you can't speak in Setswana", and I had a feeling that the person possibly had something of immense importance to say on that morning when he wanted to say something on 9/11, but there was no avenue at that specific moment for that expression to come forth.

I've said that there is entertainment, there is information, we have education. It has been pointed out I think very truthfully that the SABC strives from programmes such as Take 5 to a host of other programmes that deal specifically with education, but there is education and there is education. There is education in what has been called informal knowledge building, IKB. The sector regulator ICASA, the Chairperson is here, Mr Paris Mashile, in its conditions in terms of the licensing of the SABC, has raised the percentage in terms of what the SABC will be required to provide in terms of education, in terms of informal knowledge building.

I think somewhere in my presentation I would like to say that all this comes from what we call the participation of the public, in what other people, given to more revolutionary rhetoric, would call people's power, where the public are able to make representations that do influence or have an impact on the policy that comes from government that has to be implemented by the sector regulator.

We have entertainment, Tuwana has said something about entertainment, the mindless, the sublime and the ridiculous. There is entertainment, there is sport, there is rugby, there is soccer. I remember in '95 when we won the Rugby World Cup, there never was a country that was more united in its collective self-image, and I remember when we also won CAF, South Africans were over the moon and there was a certain benevolence, there was a certain sense of achievement. And I also remember whenever we lose, as is happening quite frequently, especially Bafana Bafana, when we lose, the losing to the hands or in the boots of other African countries is in direct proportion to our xenophobia. We become more xenophobic the more we lose.

I suppose this has got nothing to do with the public broadcaster, it has got nothing to do with the media except of course the support that the media as well as the CEO of the SABC, Mr Dali Mpofo who exhorted us to join him in a rah rah mission to Burkina Faso. I wanted to go, Dali, but I couldn't. I also remember some time back when one journalist, Jabulani Sekakane, was asked on Morning Live, they caught him unaware, what was the score last night in soccer, and Jabulani is one of those people that have got nothing to do with soccer, he hardly watches it, and it felt for him as if he had committed national suicide on television. That's sport for you.

In the end then one is still left with the feeling that information, education and entertainment are packaged in a manner that seeks to position South African cultural, educational, informational output not in Africa but on another setting, perhaps in the United states.

I spoke of the cacophony. What this means is found in a book by Peter Grant and Chris Wood titled "Blockbusters and Trade Laws." It's also subtitled "Popular Culture in a Globalised World." In this book there is a section where they speak of: "In the peculiar market of popular culture the most popular offering is often not the most profitable one." For instance, news, popular drama, soaps. And in the case of newspapers, features, comment, all that comment does not attract a

consumer rate volume of advertising that can sustain the creative offerings. We have that problem. I think someone has made an observation that the SABC, for instance, gets the majority of its budget through advertising, 85, and that has got an impact on how the SABC then reflects itself. The role of advertisers and advertising needs to be explored, where ad-spend becomes the arbiter of taste.

It is in this light, for instance, that when the issue of the two channels of the SABC, two additional channels, the regional channels was mooted, there was a big debate as to what extent do these then start to make inroads into this possible spending by advertisers, and to what extent does it threaten the existence of other channels. But there is also the overarching feeling that there are languages that are not catered for that should be catered for, where positive discrimination should happen.

But if you look at advertising today you do get a sense that the public broadcaster also is part of those agencies that suffers immensely because we've spoken about the 8-minute news, a hell of a lot more in terms of other programming can look, seem, feel as if it's been dictated externally in terms of to what extent would a programme such as this attract a clientele such as this or an LSM just as this. I always use possibly offensively the issue of news, or the issue of certain programmes on television that are very popular, soaps, etc., that are in indigenous languages or a mix.

And programmes that are on other channels that attract very, very, very few ARs, few viewers or watchers and those that attract a certain clientele, a certain LSM, that get a lot of advertising, running into millions are the ones that are more successful. And those that might be seen, might attract millions and millions of eyes are not supported by advertisers. So the numbers really generally do not matter as much as the quality of the viewers of those specific programmes. That's an anomaly that has got to be addressed and I do not know how it can be addressed but it's got an implication for certain interventions to happen. Certain interventions to happen in a manner where what is wanted by people is supported and is seen and is purveyed especially on, the national broadcaster.

Having said all this, I think the South African media in its totality right across the board has to be commended for it has driven in given instances. There have been, as has been said, acts of great journalism, acts of bravery, acts of a need to come out with a story, a need to inform, a need to entertain and a need to educate or addressing those needs. Sure, it has to make money, improve circulation and help build society, but all of us have a role in shaping the direction of the media. Today we have what I call people's power and we have to use it. Society has to make representations, for instance, and participate in public hearings when the media faces the sector regulator.

Recently, even the day before yesterday I've been buttonholed by people who have said that, commented on the damning-down of the media and the damning-down is explained as some of the programming, soft-core pornography on television, and I've grappled with this, I've thought about this because these are of course offensive, can be offensive, depending on the tastes you have or that cater to you. But I've always thought that - I remembered what was said by Herbert Marcuse, the French political scientist / philosopher who used to say that: "Obscene is not the painting of a woman exhibiting her pubic hair. Obscene is the picture of a general exhibiting his medals won in a war of aggression," and I do believe that in South Africa today we make a big meal about what our children see on television; we must.

We make a big meal about that but I do believe that we also must make a big meal about the kind of conditions in which our kids grow because 9 out of 10 cases, our kids, the images that they see on television are images that they live with everyday. If you go to Diepsloot and you see how those kids sleep next to the people engaging in the activity that you regard as soft-core porn on television, if you see what the poet, Pablo Neruda, says: "Go and see the blood on the streets", I think we need to be able to look at that and then come up and criticise and come up

and say, this is right, this is wrong.

I'm not saying that there should be pornography on television, God knows I wouldn't say that for many reasons. One of them being, I am very afraid of a public lynching and I see here Mphakane is really, really getting ready to get on my case. But I am saying that, let us also look at a host of other obscenities that exist in our society, that we have the power to address. We have the political instruments and we have access to those political instruments and political representatives. Let us look at that.

I think that I have said what I wanted to say this morning. I used to work sometime back in the SABC so it is a place that I regard with fondness. I had the task of being a Director of Programmes on television, so I understand the kind of juggling and the balancing act that has to be done to ensure that the public broadcaster survives, at the same time, it is profitable and, at the same time, it fulfils its mandate. It's a very, very onerous mandate, but I do believe that the public broadcaster, as well as any other media in this country, do need to know that they have to help us to move from the stage we are in, to be more informed, to contextualise more.

For instance, I become very irritated whenever I see on the news, Donald Rumsfeld being represented in circumstances as let's say, any leader of a progressive country, I think that some kind of context needs to be done, some kind of intervention, without pandering to or possibly editorialising in a manner that skews or that lies to us. I do think the media has a role to help us be a new race of men and women who can come forth and take control.

Thank you very much, Chairperson.

**CHAIRPERSON:** I think it's one of those rare situations where the Panellists get enough time to get to say what they have to tell us, because we do have enough time. We are told I can go up to half past one, when we can have lunch, but we'll try to wrap it up just before then.

I think Mr Langa said some really important points. He pointed out that although sometimes, as journalists, we tend to be very hard on ourselves, there is a lot of good work which is being done, although one will actually concede that sometimes it is too far and too few in-between.

He speaks of Hertzog, what he says, that actually it seems he's battling to state something that Hertzog had actually mentioned, that if he were in a tabloid he'd have made a point of telling us that Hertzog actually also said that the reason he doesn't want television is that black men will see white women and admire them. If he were in the tabloid he would have made sure of mentioning that.

He's pointed out quite a few problems and challenges that we have, telling us also that the news features and comment, the subject really it should be core to a newspaper, a very, very important of a newspaper and also a broadcaster, the advertising is a challenge which has to be looked at, that ad spend has become an arbiter of taste, that's an anomaly that he pointed to, quite importantly.

Then Francis pointed towards some of the problems that people actually experience, some of the consumers of our publications. That a huge part of the community, which has actually become the community of South Africa, is not being covered and still being vilified and called names. It's one of the challenges that we actually have to try to make sure that we cover that community, where our readers and the population of South Africa actually come to understand the complex situations that face that community. That we also have to realise there are differences between, say, illegal immigrants and refugees, that those people are not the same person and the name calling at some point will have to come to an end.

Prof Kupe, also I think what he did was also to highlight some of the good things that actually have been done by the broadcaster, while he was pointing out some of the challenges that still

face the public broadcaster. The same things as Ferial said, some very good points. That at some point we do actually admire the kind of resources that the SABC has and it's often you hear, newspapers run stories from SAPA, SAPA quotes the SABC, because of the kind of reach that the SABC has. So a lot of good work is being done at the public broadcaster as well, although the challenges are actually still there.

Maybe now it would be time for us to take questions. But also, even before that, that the Panel should actually remember that we also are supposed to be answering the question of the mix. Can there be an ideal mix between education, information and entertainment in our publications or our broadcasts? Maybe the difficulty of answering that question is clear, in the problem that you cannot have percentages allocated to how much entertainment should there be vis-à-vis normal news and education.

I'll open the floor to questions. I'll take three each time and then there'll be responses. One here, the second, and three.

**MS KHENI:** Thank you for the opportunity.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Please tell us who you are.

**MS KHENI:** Okay, Ma Kheni, spokesman, Child Abuse Action Group. You are a very good reader of body language, because I am actually about to kill you, Mandla. Before I kill Mandla, I would like to say that, Ferial, I'd like to congratulate you on a very good presentation and I sincerely, from the bottom of my heart, hope you were joking when you said next time we should have Swashwe here. You weren't? I'm disappointed. I am disappointed because, as a journalist, Ferial, I really would have appreciated it if you added your voice to the condemning of tabloids and to the dunning down. I'm really disappointed that you think dunning down is a good idea. I think the LSM 1 people have the same right to be respected the way you respect your readers.

Now the big issue. The big issue is, we have a choice all the time, whether we're journalists, we're media practitioners or we're just *gewone mense*, we always have a choice to be part of the problem or to be part of the solution. We have a very big problem in this country of women and child abuse. Yesterday the SABC mentioned with pride that they are championing the fight against women abuse and children abuse, referring to the 16 days of activism. I would like to talk about what the SABC does for the rest of the 365 days, not even the 249 (sic). All the good things that are done by the SABC have already been mentioned, I'm not going to repeat that.

But we, from the Child Abuse Action Group, are very concerned that the print media chooses to be part of the problem by portraying women as sex objects and the SABC chooses to call sleaze entertainment. The session this morning was on freedom of expression. The sad thing is, when people like us from the Child Abuse Action Group and other people who want to live in a decent society, object to this, the excuse that is used is freedom of expression. People lost their lives in this country, people fought for freedom of expression and it is very sad when we start using freedom of expression as an excuse to justify sleaze.

I would like to suggest that when we look at the way forward, we should look at - a lot of noises have been made, a lot of the right noises, that gender equality is important, we should defend the rights of the weak - I won't repeat all the good things that people have been saying from the podium but that all gets nullified when we allow the media to be part of such a very serious problem. And I hope the way forward will be, for instance, what to do about when people see sleaze on TV, they are supposed to complain to the BCCSA. We pretend that this is a first-world country, where parents of children who are concerned about sleaze have those facilities to send a fax to the BCCSA. I think when we got rid of censorship, we threw out the baby with the bath water, because it is still the responsibility of the media to protect our children. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Has media been part of the problem?

**MR MOLOKELE:** Daniel Molokele, I'm the Co-ordinator of the Southern African Networks Forum. I just wanted to make two comments, one on the *makwerekwere* factor, which Prof Francis Nyamnjoh talked about. I think the media of South Africa has failed to recognise the fact that there is a growing population of Africans who have been left with no choice but to relocate to South Africa and to that extent, the continual representation of fellow Africans, especially blacks, as some subhuman species is wrong.

Sometimes I read headlines when I'm driving to work, where it says alien race or whatever or whatever, from one of our tabloids. And I say, why do you have to specifically highlight the fact that the person is an alien. It gives signals to society that the crime you see around you is from fellow Africans who are not originally from South Africa. So we need to stop that kind of reporting because sometimes some of these crimes are committed by people you would consider as South Africans originally and some foreigners, like maybe Zimbabweans, they are not even familiar with some of the crimes that are found in this country.

The other point I wanted to highlight, there is this thing; we need to decolonise ourselves in terms of this philosophy that everything from the West is the best. It reflects in terms of the kind of entertainment we give to our communities, to our viewers, to our listeners, in terms of the quality of the programmes we receive from the United States, from the UK and so on, and it shows in the programme content.

As someone who really watches a lot of television, I would really want to see a situation, especially if you look at ETV and SABC, whereby there is more emphasis on local programmes, local in the sense that they are being produced from a community which is black and also from an African community. There are a lot of television channels across the continent which SABC can have partnerships with, in terms of exchanging programmes, ranging from soaps, to dramas and so on. And that will enrich the kind of viewership in terms of programme content which we have here.

I also wanted to say that from the United States we have channels which have been specifically designed for black people, like BET, which SABC should be able to come up with partnerships with and bring their programmes into local television. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Can we keep it very brief, Ma'am.

**LESEGO:** My name is Lesego, I'm from the SABC. I have a question for Prof Tuwana Kupe. But first, before I state my question, I wanted to just thank Prof Nyamnjoh for picking on that very poignant material that he chose to bring to our conference. Because I don't think that, as South Africans, we sit down to think about what careless words like *makwerekwere* actually mean in the kind of social context we live in, especially when you consider our history.

My question for Prof Kupe is, this overarching framework and strategy that the SABC should have at the top of its mind when it compiles its programming, I was wondering if you have something specific to suggest to the SABC about what that should be, if we are to conceive of a media culture in South Africa that will match the kind of democratic views that are stated in our Constitution.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Responses from the right.

**MS HAFFAJEE:** I suppose I'll just respond on the tabloid issue and tell you a story. Every morning, going to work, I drive through the Zoo Lake and Zoo Lake, in addition to now being home of Moyo, it's also home to lots of unemployed people who sit there and perhaps read newspapers to look for jobs. The newspaper of choice, I watch it very carefully, is increasingly the Daily Sun and if 500 000 workers every day are making a choice to buy that paper, perhaps because it's cheap, I don't think that I can sit here and condemn that. As an editor, I'm interested

that. As an activist, I think you should be lobbying the Daily Sun, rather than saying it's just too awful for words. Child Abuse Action Group is a very powerful lobby group and I think you'd be well placed to make them change their perspectives on things which trouble and worry you.

**PROF KUPE:** What I'm saying, in the context of my presentation I couldn't say certain things. Here I want to be very careful to say that I'm not saying - it's not a media attack on the SABC, and overarching editorial and programming strategy is also a function of a number of other things I didn't mention. One of it is a function of sustainability and stability in the personnel that are involved in programming, because then you can see what your output is and also it's a function of resources. Mandla alluded to the fact that SABC's resources as a public broadcaster often are not public resources, even in relation to programming.

But what do I mean by an overarching editorial strategy? I think that the programme schedule, even from an advertiser's point of view and from a point of view of you delivering certain things to audiences, it's something that is consciously planned, it has to be consciously planned. You have to ask yourself what are the challenges that face South Africa today? I choose to quote South Africa, and many other African countries today, democratising, developing and developing countries in a globalising world and they face specific challenges of a particular nature. You have a Constitution that is formally and impressively one of the best constitutions you can have, that ascribes certain values, certain freedoms to all of us, and also carefully shows the right balance between those freedoms, those responsibilities and those duties.

I'm saying that an overarching editorial in programming strategies takes its cue from that and creates the necessary programmes that are able to interpret that practically into what citizens can then use as a resource, operating as South Africans. I look at schedules every Sunday, thanks to the newspapers, and I often ask myself the question, but what is it that one would get that makes it distinctly South African, but also in an African context, in a global context, in a country that is a young democracy with challenges to break down democratic values and norms.

Also, what does one get there when it comes to education? Does this education that comes from the SABC cut across also the information paradigm, as well as the entertainment paradigm? Because then that is what gives, as marketers, you call it, your brand. If you go to any country, especially established countries, and you listen to their broadcasts and you watch their television, whether you agree or disagree, you can see the overall take on things, whether you agree or disagree. But that also provokes you to have your own kind of take.

The question I'm raising is, do we see that overall take that is part of defining ourselves as South Africans, Africans, in a globalising world? As I say, I want to emphasise, it's a function of a number of factors; stability and sustainability in human resources, quality of resources and an ability to understand that a constitution must become a living document.

**MR LANGA:** I think I need to re-address myself to the issue that I was raising in terms of which Ma Kheni has asked, relating to child and women abuse. I think that there must be a recognition, there must be an understanding that even though the abusers or the perpetrators of these violations, these crimes, these horrific acts are made, there must be an understanding that an overwhelming majority of the male species is spectacularly affronted by these. I am also, or the last time I looked, I was part of the male species, and whenever I watch television, usually in the company of my daughter, and this thing leaps across from the box into the living room, it always feels like some kind of personal violation too, because it is inhuman, it is alien - that's where we can use the word alien in its true form.

So I do believe, as in any other scourge that society needs to confront, that there should be an understanding of the role that society, as a collective, can play to address this, so that it does not become ghetto-ised or genderised; it's just the thing that women are going to be involved in and not men. Because men are also part of the activity that brings into this world those babies, those children that get abused. I just think I need to make that point.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Anymore questions? One, two, three.

**THAMI:** Thank you very much. I just want to refer to this question of xenophobia and I'm aware that it's something that may not necessarily be dealt with exhaustively in this forum. I stand almost with a fear that I might end up being accused of using apartheid and the past to apologise for certain attitudes. But be that as it may, I think I need to express this feeling.

Prof Nyamnjoh, I haven't heard or I don't have the advantage of having read or come across the book that you are writing in terms of xenophobia in South Africa. But my concern is that I'm wondering whether, when we do treat this subject, we do look at it within the context of the historical experience of the South African people themselves, where they come from and what it is that they have experienced. I'm talking about millions of people, South Africans, who have been systematically, under apartheid, injected with fear, a sense of mutual suspicion and hate, denigrated and their dignity trampled under foot.

It's not so long ago that we were reading in the papers about black on black violence. Could it not be that the manifestation of xenophobia is a sense of self-hate amongst ourselves that Frantz Fanon speaks about? Where we then have, to continue further, without quoting him directly, where we have what he calls misdirected violence. Are we not directing violence against ourselves, as black people, as a manifestation of self-hate? You must recall that apartheid used to say that South African blacks are better than their neighbours, we are better off than the Zambians, we are better off than Africans in other neighbouring countries.

To come back to be within the context of this Conference and say, what role has the media played insofar as this question is concerned? To what extent do we, as South Africans, know Africa out there? I know that there are people who stay in Zola, in Zola Township or parts of Soweto, who have never been anywhere else except maybe Eloff Street, the city centre, they know nothing more about - and their world view is informed by the circumstances and the situation in which they find themselves.

Now if you're going to have a media that's going to say or highlight the fact that the Nigerians are drug lords, that Africans out there, the Zimbabweans are poor, in the backdrop of what apartheid said, we are better off. And within the backdrop of the race consciousness that has been instilled in our country, wherein a person of a darker skin is inferior to me, even though I'm still black, but that person, because he's of a darker skin, is inferior to me. I think all of these questions need to be taken into consideration when we discuss this question of xenophobia and begin to address the root causes, which are found in the evolution of this South African society and not treat the symptoms and the manifestations.

Because also, finally, there is the perception that the so-called *makwerekweres* are coming to take our jobs and we're poor. It's a competition for resources and it's a natural reaction. You see this in France, you see it in Germany, you see it in all of these countries. They're even passing laws to restrict people from African countries from going - and these are highly developed countries.

**QONDILE:** Chairman, I'm Qondile, I'm based in the Free state Legislature. I've got just two things to raise. The first one, it's a concern, it was earlier raised by a lady who happened to work for SABC in the Free state, talking about a body of a journalist that was discovered somewhere in a hotel lying there dead and that was not actually raised by the media. But the point that I want to make with regard to that, is that the media institutions or individual media institutions themselves have to make some self-introspection, because issues of individual welfare come into play sometimes. When you look at the situation of that person, it was very pathetic, he was actually working as a freelancer, if I'm not mistaken, and he didn't mean anything, according to me, to that institution, the SABC in the Free state. Because if he meant, if he was valuable, if he was an asset to the institution, I think that could have been taken up by the SABC itself. I think

the same situation has got a tremendous impact again into the community media. I think Console tried to deal with the matter earlier on.

Chairman, lastly, regarding the item itself, getting the right mix. You know, I happened to be an intern some time, during my early days, under Paula Fray, she was working for The Star at that time, and their motto was "tell it as it is". I always grapple with myself as to how do you tell the story as it is without putting a flag, without putting it into a context and not necessarily assassinating journalistic principles? Here is a situation in the Free state, in the local council, people are revolting, they are burning the shops of people who are seen to be foreigners, and you come with the same motto, "tell it as it is". You tell it as it is and you are fanning the situation and those people are being attacked, who are seen to be foreigners to us, who are coming from outside South Africa. Now I'm saying, as you tell it as it is, you've got to be mindful as to whether you are not taking the country into doldrums. Thank you, Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON:** The last two questions, this side, I'll make it four this time. Please try to be very, very brief, I have no intention of proceeding till half past one, we should stop about five minutes before the time.

**MS MOLEPO:** Thank you, my name is Mapule Molepo from the SACP. I want to raise that the SABC is one of the most influential institutions in Africa and if it just realised that it is operating in Africa, not Europe, it will make it very more helpful. Because what it needs to do is to promote African pride. I want to argue that, because one speaker spoke about having to generate money and all those things, but I want to argue that the SABC has enough schedule that it can cater for all of us. If it can only cut to the many repeats that they are having on their programmes, because if you watch the programme today, in the evening, in the morning around five o'clock until about two o'clock are the things that you watched yesterday. You go to Saturday, from ten o'clock until 1:00, it's the things that you watched during the week.

So if you can just cut on those repeats and bring more programmes that are very developmental and can help in terms of - because, you know, the education and influencing the youth as well, that would help us ... (interjection)

**CHAIRPERSON:** On that note, Ma'am, we'll have to move to the next question, please. Your comment?

**MBUZANA:** I just want to raise a few questions based on maybe generally what was said by the speakers. There's a question of language and the ability to define the easiness of your surrounding and yourself. I think, I see it, this issue being taken like a peripheral issue. If you look at the statistics of media consumers, you'll realise that it's mostly in Johannesburg, highly educated people, affluent, but the general population would depend mostly on maybe SABC television and stuff like that, who speak their indigenous languages, are actually starved of information, because it has to come in English. I'm not talking about education, because even in our schools, our children go to school and they are forced to do Afrikaans or else it will not be complete.

And take that into the issue of xenophobia and trying to bring a person to an understanding that he is himself. But I see that in the media, it doesn't look like it's an issue that needs to be put into context and be debated thoroughly, the issue of language ... (interjection)

**CHAIRPERSON:** Can I just stop you there, sir, sorry, if we can have responses and have more people speaking. I'm sorry, but I have got to do this. Any response, Prof?

**PROF NYAMNJOH:** I'm very grateful for the comment on the need to situate xenophobia in Southern Africa within the historical context of apartheid and the diminishing self-esteem for the communities that were the victims of apartheid, which is precisely what you need to do in any context, when you are studying xenophobia. But I also agree with you that in order to

understand xenophobia in South Africa within the current context, we have to put it in a global perspective, a perspective of neoliberal globalisation that has tended to promise a lot more than it can deliver, to invite many more people to a bazaar where few are given clear cut choices or any clear directions.

We are all obsessed with becoming part of the consumer bandwagon, which are the possibilities that are made available by entertainment media but unfortunately very few can afford this. Which means that globally very few people actually graduate into full citizenship, whether you are talking political, cultural or economic citizenship. This makes globalisation a paradoxical process, a process of flows, but quite paradoxically, a process of closures.

It's therefore not surprising, in fact, it should not surprise us that in the context of globalisation, where we are most reminded of who truly belongs anywhere, we are most reminded of who qualifies to be citizens and in almost every country people are re-examining assumptions that they have made before. In countries like France, which you mentioned, where it was normal for them believe that the French states, the metro polit was there to assimilate you, to make you become French, they realised that it was more assumed than real. People could come in and become French only to the extent that it made sense to them, but at parallel existences of their cultural representation.

So basically now that there is this chasing after scarce resources in a very aggressive manner as the reality of this globalisation, people are re-examining and saying, wait a minute, you may call yourself French, but you are only second generation, you are only this, even third generation are being criticised. It is in that regard that I say it's not only history alone that explains South Africans' xenophobia. When you take on board the fact that although the Constitution is very liberal and indeed often touted as the most liberal in the world, there are growing uncertainties and insecurities even amongst those who have been defined as citizens.

While the black community is uncertain, as was pointed out, by their economical plight, the fact that they remain the poorest, and therefore they're aspiring to become part of those who are harvesting from these new opportunities, the Indian community, for example, is increasingly at risk, their own insecurities, especially in places like KwaZulu-Natal where they're saying, wait a minute, you have benefited a lot more and you don't have enough credentials to claim, when the chips are down, that you can be defined as a son or daughter of the soil.

And also the idea that you straddle belonging, you don't quite belong, you have one foot in India and one foot in KwaZulu-Natal, you are harvesting the best of both worlds. Therefore Amandiya comes out as a timely reminder that if you don't decide firmly to belong, you risk becoming the *makwerekwere* within, because the process of chasing a role, those who don't belong, so make up your mind. Now I'm saying that all of that cannot be put, explained only by the history of apartheid, it has to be also put in the context of a certain type of globalisation that does not only celebrate the rhetoric of opening up enclosures and fast mobility, but the reality is that of closures and the confinements of opportunities.

**PROF KUPE:** I'd like to joint this debate on xenophobia because I'm often concerned that there's also a perception, I'm not saying - I haven't read your book, so I'm not saying it's there - but that necessarily xenophobia is a monopoly of South Africa, other Africans are also xenophobic against South Africans and against each other. So we have to be very critical in dealing with this issue because it is also part of lack of information among Africans about each other.

And it is connected precisely to the question he raises about language. If you take Southern Africa, I always tell my students, there's a commonality of languages in South Africa and in the neighbouring countries that shows that there are historical and cultural links that are also ongoing in family relationships in there. That is also going on at the same time that xenophobia is going on. So it's not actually one, it's a very, very complex issue, despite the globalisation.

But, secondly, also to say there are also perceptions by Africans there, given sometimes the collapse of their economies or political crises and other things, that South Africa is a land of milk and honey. And then living there without any necessary skills actually, that you could actually contribute to South Africa, and then turning into illegal immigration and crime, together with other South Africans who are also criminals. So the matter is very, very complex.

One must then raise the question, what should the media and especially our public broadcasters, which have networks, do in order to be able to exchange this information among Africans as Africans? And where possible, using their own languages and retracing the history. I think the recent project pioneered through NEPAD by President Mbeki on the Timbuktu manuscripts is a great example of rebuilding that cultural confidence in those links to counter notions of xenophobia and separateness among Africans.

That is why it is regrettable, my last point, Chairman, that often when you have programmes like NEPAD - I'm not saying there are no problems with NEPAD, one must critically engage with it, or the African Renaissance or the AU, they tend to remain at the level of the leadership and the elite and there's no engagement with the ordinary people through the media. Because through there, you counter notions of xenophobia in a positive way, rather than in a reactive way, to say you have attacked *Makwerekwere*, so now you must be arrested, you have violated their rights. That must be done, but there must be a proactive strategy, talking about the existing links between Africans themselves and how to forge stronger links through economic integration, political and cultural integration.

**PROF NYAMNJOH:** Thanks a lot. I wouldn't want to be misunderstood here, that my study of xenophobia is about South Africa, it's only one chapter in my study that is about South Africa. I'm studying a global phenomenon within a context of globalisation. In fact, South Africa doesn't have the preserve of xenophobia and it should not be taken as such.

My study, from Southern Africa, I take two examples, South Africa and Botswana, and I also used the example of your country, Zimbabwe, as the greatest victim of this xenophobia, precisely because we're talking in the context of economic problems within the continent and also political and this study is generally situated within xenophobia in Europe and North America and everywhere else. So please, I just wanted to make that point.

**MR LANGA:** On xenophobia, except to say that there is an irony a the sense that South Africa consists of people that were harboured and fed and protected by countries north of the Limpopo and the most important thing is what has been said about the role that the media can play in heightening the consciousness towards people not being xenophobic. In fact, I have a personal story; I've just come back from a visit in Kinshasa where I found that there were many people there who thought that I was Congolese because there are many Langas there. So we are all very, very interrelated.

**CHAIRPERSON:** We're meant to host a seminar on xenophobia in the media. My apologies that it hasn't taken place and I'll certainly make sure it happens as soon as possible, because it is a very important issue. I think maybe a lot of the issues we have will come from there. We have to examine a lot of issues, we have to examine how in effect that some people who come from, say Mozambique can melt in, just be part of the community in Soweto and be accepted and then when other people who come from, wherever they come from and they go to Hillbrow and then form no-go areas in Hillbrow, you find South Africans cannot go into those areas. How do these things contribute to these perceptions as well? I think when we do that, we'll obviously have a speaker who will be able to help us with that. I promised to organise that within two weeks. Yes, you'll have it within two weeks.

Lunch will be served, I think it's in the main restaurant, and copies of the books by Prof Francis Nyamnjoh are available for sale outside. Thank you very much.

**LUNCH BREAK**

**DR RENSBURG:** We're into the last session. Hello, hello, welcome, welcome. You have to tell jokes here now, you know. There's not enough entertainment I'm told. Colleagues, friends, comrades, if there's any left in this room. Just a couple of announcements before we go into this session.

**SESSION THREE:**

**CAN THE MEDIA DELIVER?  
SKILLS AND CAPACITY IN THE NEWSROOM - WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?**

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CHAIRPERSON: SHEILA MMUSI  
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**DR RENSBURG:** I just heard Phil Molefe saying that he's not here for exams; no free lunch, right, so if you could, during this hour, fill in. Ideally we would want 100% response rate to this. We want your genuine comments and advice. I think we've heard already some of it in the sessions this morning and yesterday, but please put in writing those recommendations, whether they're about the Panellists, whether they're about the subject matter or the material that we have tackled, and so on and so forth. So please, if we could do that.

We're going to aim to finish at 4.30 so our next session, Session Three begins now and we'll conclude roughly at about 3.35 after which we will go into the final session immediately, there will be no tea or coffee break, apologies, and the conference conclusion session, the three partners will join us on the podium here together with Bra'Thami, to wrap up the conference and to point for us, the way forward. So please if we could therefore apply our minds, this is a very important session, the next one as well as the last session.

And then lastly, just to indicate that we do have, for those who will be *die bitter einders*, we will be having some wine and of course, water, and I'm not certain if - where's Fakir - whether we would have broken the fast at that time since it's Ramadan, but we will have some cocktails as well as some hors d'oeuvres this afternoon. So please don't rush off, it is an opportunity perhaps just to have a final word, final networking opportunity, final conversation. Please do not disappoint us.

And over to the Chairperson of this session. Thanks, Ma'am.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Welcome back, ladies and gentlemen; *avuxeni, dumelang*, good afternoon. Let's get right into the business of this afternoon. Our session is entitled: "Can the Media Deliver? Skills and Capacity in the newsroom - what needs to be done?"

Your Chairperson is Prof Sheila Mmusi from the University of Limpopo. Our panellists are Ms Paula Fray, Media Trainer, Dr Patience Naves, Director of Human Capital Service at the SABC, Dr Mphakane Kupa, Senior Lecturer at the University of Limpopo, Department of Media Studies, where I also come from.

Getting started, we will start with Ms Paula Fray. Over to you, Ma'am.

**PANELLIST**  
**Ms Paula Fray,**  
**Media Trainer**

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak here today. It's been a very interesting two days because I think it's opened up the challenges that reporters face. Journalists in our newsroom face a host of challenges. They have to report for a local audience within an era of globalisation, in an era of regional integration and an era of national transformation. And they have to give context to issues South Africans, as we saw here actually over the last two days, are still grappling with and grappling to understand, and they have to do so in a way that readers, viewers and listeners would want to pay in time and money for the product that they are producing.

They do so in newsrooms that have little time, they battle time and capital resources and human resources. They do so in newsrooms that face increasing business pressures, to be more cost efficient and bottom line focused, and they do so amid ever-changing technology, reader demand and societal pressures.

In May 2002 SANEF conducted a skills audit on basic journalism skills in the newsroom and the findings were quite shocking. It showed that there was a great need for basic journalism training. In fact, the then SANEF Chairperson, Mathatha Tsedu described it as a wake-up call for journalism, education and training. So let me remind you of some of the findings.

We fell short in 11 critical areas, namely:

- poor reporting skills,
- lack of concern with accuracy,
- poor writing skills,
- lack of life skills,
- low level of commitment,
- weak interviewing skills,
- weak legal knowledge,
- lack of sensitivity,
- weak knowledge of ethics,
- poor general historical and contextual knowledge, and
- low level of trainer knowledge.

Some examples from that particular skills audit, the interviewee stated that reporters lack the ability to develop a story or identify story ideas, with between 30 to 60% lacking this skill. News Editors also indicated that reporters lack the skills to develop follow-up stories. As a result, few stories were investigated further than the initial report, with little research conducted to develop new and different story angles. Even basic writing skills were found to be lacking in many cases. News editors rated 38% of reporters below average in terms of properly using the five Ws and the H. And when it came to using basic news values, the interviewee said 23% of reporters were rated below average. Essentially one of the issues that came up was that the interviewee speculated that the lack of human resources in newsrooms, as well as the juniorisation of newsrooms contributed to this situation.

So fast-forward to this year and SANEF has just completed a Skills Audit amongst first-line news managers, in other words, our News Editors, our Production Executives, the people working on the front lines of our news production, and this audit not only looked at the perceptions of six management skills of these News Editors, but also how their subordinates and their bosses perceived them.

But we really should not be surprised by the SANEF results, because we've seen that, we've seen those results first hand in our newsrooms, we work with it every day in our papers, on our

radio bulletins and on our television broadcasts. And again, the skills audit showed a great need for skills, this time at managerial level. And what concerns me about that, is that these are the very people we are expecting to drive our process of improved coverage, of better coverage, of contextual coverage, of a change in the way we report, not only on our own country but on the SADC region and on Africa. These are the people we want to help in transforming the way we report our journalism.

In short, from the perspective of first-line managers, managerial competencies should be improved in these areas and they're actually listed from most important to least important:

- Global awareness,
- self-management,
- communication. Why does communication always come up when we're talking communicators?
- strategic action,
- planning and administration, and
- team work.

From the reporter's perspective, they wanted attention to be paid to team work, global awareness, self-management, communication, planning and administration and strategic action.

That research team that conducted that on behalf of SANEF proposed that the media look further than formal additional training to address management efficiencies amongst first-line managers and essentially because management is a dynamic then, it changes, there are new things constantly, managers need to be constantly upgrading their skills. And so essentially the research pointed that ongoing targeted training is important. They wanted the media to actually prioritise managerial competencies and to tackle them in the order of greatest need. And they wanted to introduce a process of internal marketing that individual media houses actually needed to inform staff what was available and what was happening.

Much has been done since 2002, members of SANEF will know that a lot of things have been initiated, SANEF has, for example, initiated a process to expand awareness of accuracy checks, there's been an increase in in-house training and external training, and SANEF's representatives on the MAP SETA SGB have been integral in producing a learnership for junior reporters. All this should contribute to better skills.

As a trainer, I believe my job is to work myself out of a job, that training should not be a full-time - training at one place should not be a full-time occupation. It should not be a crutch, it should be a kick-start for the newsroom to do it. Because the best training, quite frankly happens on the job. It happens as reporters are doing the stories, it happens when the manager is able to speak a language of training to reporters who are conducting day to day work. Journalism is dynamic and so too should be the training, as journalists are receiving and it just highlights the importance of managers in this whole process. Those are the people who really have the responsibility to train and upgrade skills in our newsrooms.

I was thinking about this session and I really thought that these sessions should not be called, "Can the Media Deliver", it should have been called "How can we Deliver", because those of us who are passionate about journalism and the role that it can play in society know that it's something that we have to do, it's not something that we must ask whether or not we can do it. There is no choice.

So what do I think we should do? I think that creating a culture of excellence in journalism is critical, because if we have that culture, then when we find out that reporters have limited general knowledge, as we did find out, it's not an "ag shame" moment, it's a shameful moment, and it's not something that we can tolerate because it's there, it's something that we absolutely have deal with. And there's just too little incentive at the moment not to simply shrug our

shoulders and say, our newsrooms are bad, or our newsrooms are junior.

Like Prof Sibanda, I also dislike the excuse, juniorisation, but I do think it is a problem in our newsroom. It's not the presence of junior reporters that's the problem, it's the absence of a critical mass of senior reporters that's the problem. It's the absence of good management and quite frankly, good leadership in our newsroom that's the problem and it's not just the number of years that a reporter has been working in a newsroom that matters, there are too many newsrooms filled with people sporting long-service awards who provide little quality service, quite frankly, to the journalism profession and again, it goes back to management.

Experience helps reporters raise red flags in terms of source credibility and diversity, in terms of information accuracy. It helps newsrooms anticipate stories and follow them up. It helps reporters provide readers with the context and explanation that Lizeka Mda pointed out that was so lacking in Jacob Zuma story. We have to ask ourselves how we manager to turn enthusiastic, educated junior reporters into disappointed and disappointing spokespersons for government and corporate spokespersons, long before the investment we've made into their basic journalism training has been paid off.

Secondly, I believe that that professional performance management that takes into account all the necessary steps such as performance, mentoring and coaching, clear communication of job expectation, career development and enhancement is critical if we want to stop the churn and stop our reporters leaving before they've actually made a contribution to the newsroom. Without that, quite frankly, training is a waste of money. I see people come into training sessions and go back into the newsroom without any sense of accountability that they have to improve and they have to take back something different into the newsroom.

And thirdly, I believe that organisations need to have a strategic training strategy that ties in with human resource development and that has a clear objective and outcomes that are measured. I think we've lost faith in training and I think we need to restore that faith by actually making it accountable. As a former editor, I also think it's a business imperative.

And then journalism needs to assess public perceptions about it. Do we attract South Africa's brightest young minds, are we perceived as a useful, dynamic institution on the forefront of transformation, or are we perceived as a bunch of wimps, cow-towing to government and advertisers, incapable of understanding the complexities of transformation, ill-equipped to tell the South Africa's multi-faceted story and too lazy to even try? I hope not.

Thank you very much, SABC for kick-starting this debate, let's not look back at it and say that it was a wake-up call. SANEF made that wake-up call in 2002, I believe it's time to deliver. Thank you very much.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you very much, Ms Paula Fray. Could we please switch off our cellphones, this technology is really irritating. Next we have Dr Patience Naves, your turn Ma'am.

**PANELLIST**  
**Dr Patience Naves**  
**Director: Human Capital Services, SABC**

Thank you. I just need to start by saying that being new in the industry, I'll not be able to talk about the jargon of juniorisation and genre and all of those things, but what I can promise you is that I will share with you a generic approach to a skills development as a means of saying that I think the newsroom can deliver.

Which brings me to a comment that I want to do at the beginning, to say that I just noticed when I went through the agenda of yesterday and today, that it was dominated by males. I'm not sure

whether it's an indication of the absence of qualified women or it's just an oversight, but it is an observation that I've made and maybe I want to start by making a call to us to start, you know, leading by example, to acknowledge the women in the industry and actually to attempt to empower them if we have to transform the industry.

I think the Skills Development Act was promulgated amongst others to provide a framework, an institutional framework around which human resources development strategies would be put in place, but not only that, to also ensure implementation of those strategies. Alongside that, funding was also made available to enable us to develop those skills. In particular, the aims of the Act and I've selectively chosen those areas that I feel are relevant for today.

The aim is to improve the quality of life of workers, their prospects of work and labour mobility. It is also to improve productivity and competitiveness of employees which is what most businesses are interested in. It is also to promote self-employment and to increase levels of investment in education.

I just also want to say that the Act was promulgated in October 1998 for implementation in September 1999 which says that up to now, we've had six years during which to implement the requirements of the Act. At the same time, the Act was accompanied by a national human resources development strategy, which in itself was a first in the history of South Africa. What does this tell us? It tells us that as a country, we had to transform completely, we had to do away with the past and start crafting a new future and I think that from that perspective, it is relevant then for us to talk about transformation that we've so much been talking about.

Transformation is about a complete change. I cannot just but explain it in terms of changing from being a caterpillar to a butterfly. What I'm not sure of is whether there is pain when that change happens, but what I can tell you is that the human related transformation is a very, very painful process. It is painful because it takes us out of our comfort zones and forces us to learn new things.

The question is, do we know what we want to transform to? I think a fundamental challenge in terms of us talking skills development and talking transformation, is that we find ourselves in an environment that is continuously changing and the changes are becoming more and more complex. Therefore, you cannot sit in 2004, plan your transformation for the coming five years and not make an attempt to continuously review whether or not you are still focused in terms of the goals that you need to achieve. Therefore, I'm talking transformation here because I'm asking the question whether, as media, have we transformed enough, you know, to assimilate the challenges that we are continuously confronted with?

I'd just like to borrow from the economic research that was conducted in 2004, it revealed that economic growth will be achieved by, amongst others, a focus on the untapped markets. In particular of relevance is the need for us to focus on the age group 25 to 35 years. This is a critical mass of people that will take us into the next decade, if not the next century. How do we prepare this population to take us into the future, especially from a skills perspective as we attempt to craft a new future for ourselves.

The National Productivity Institute reports that in 2005 South Africa came out No. 50 out of 52 countries which is a drop from 46. I am taking this particular statistic to ask ourselves a question: Have we done what we expected of ourselves in terms of transforming our workplaces, in terms of providing opportunities for our people? Fortunately my response to that is that we needn't condemn ourselves more than we need to. In fact, I insist that we have done a lot, if you think about what real transformation is. I think this country has done a lot in terms of changing from the past to a future that we desire. I don't have a doubt though that the challenges that confront us are still huge.

I just want to mention two main challenges I foresee and I think this is mostly related to the

people that we expect to deliver, as the previous speaker has said. Do we understand the concept of talent segmentation? I'm here making reference to the generation theory whereby you find that in the media room, you are confronted with two generations, the boomers and the generation exes. Have we helped facilitate an understanding of these two generations?

The one is the generation from 1970 to 1990 and the other one is the generation from 1990 to 2005. Have we created an environment for ourselves in the media rooms, or even in our general public to come up with strategies that enable us to ensure that there is a transfer of skills? I think that we have fundamental challenge in terms of ensuring or enabling these two generations that find themselves stuck in the same room. The generation exes are very impatient, they want to learn about skills, they want to be practical, they want to be marketable. Unfortunately the boomers are people that are very comfortable with the skills they learnt in the past and they believe that those skills will take them into the future and that is not always true. So I think that we need to really focus on that.

I will not again mention the issue of gender because I think there are skills we can get from women that if they bring them to the media room, we will be able to get mileage out of them.

My last challenge that I want to mention is that, maybe it's not a challenge, it's a thought that maybe the time has come for us to learn from others. I heard that we are talking about Euro-centralism and Africanism and whatever, but on reflection, I thought maybe we need to learn from the African Leadership Development Programme, because what is happening there, there is an emphasis on learning from those people that have succeeded in the past and really taking lessons from there and crafting a South African African future, an African leadership approach. I'm asking the question: Where are we transforming towards? What is it that we need to be doing in order for us to feel that we've transformed?

I think that we need to think about it and create that common understanding and focus in the industry in order for us to achieve the very goals that we are about here today.

I think I will stop there and thank you very much.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you very much. Sorry for hurrying you up. Dr Mphakane Kupa?

**PANELLIST**  
**Dr Mphakane Kupa**  
**Department of Media Studies, University of Limpopo**

Thank you, Madam Chair. Can media deliver skills and capacity in newsroom? What needs to be done? Madam Chair, this question is pertinent in the role that media play in society. It has been pointed out over and over that media form an integral part of our lives, that we as people, we as a society depend entirely on what we get from media. However, media also depends on us on what we give as a society. In that regard then, the question as to whether media could deliver is very pertinent because as a society, we've acquired a culture, we have inhibited a new culture, a media or information laden culture.

It's a culture whereby, Madam Chair, it is very evident that as a society we can no longer be content with silence surrounding us, but for us to get information, we need to have well prepared people, people who will be able to separate facts from fiction. People who will not only report on events but would go deeper than that into finding out the cause and if possible, how that problem could be solved.

Therefore, in an event where we are faced with this problem of skills development, one tends to think back, some few years ago it was not necessary for anybody wishing to become a journalist to be trained. Journalism would be a work that you would learn as time goes on. Then, at that time, people used to apply what was called, on-job training service. You train as you work, you

learn as you work. But Madam Chair, that cannot be upheld any longer. That is why it is very critical where we see news and information delivery as such an essential task to make very sure that the interests of the society is being catered for in a proper manner.

Let me cite three dimensions which compel this whole exercise. Training is very, very important because it is very, very pertinent that there should be some developments in the field of broadcasting technology. It is not only enough for one to consider themselves a journalist without the basic knowledge of the ICT.

Point No. 2, professionalisation in news and information service delivery is critically important, so important that a journalist would understand his rights or her rights, based on the training he or she has acquired.

In the third instance, upholding democratic principles, we should make it impossible for governments to continue to deny socio-economic and political diversity of our society. This, Madam Chair, are dimensions that can only be attached to or observed where people are empowered. Now, on the question as to whether media can play a role in this respect, the question would pertinently be yes. Skills and capacity to analyse the situation or create awareness about a particular report have to be improved if we are serious about becoming active participants in the African continent and the global information society.

The problem with training people for the newsroom, however, is that too much attention is paid to specific skills as phrasing, layout and so forth, instead of paying attention to what one could call cognitive skills. Now, cognitive skills, Madam Chair, my understanding would embrace general thinking skills. To engage in these skills, newsroom staff should be encouraged to read widely, indiscriminately, and for pleasure. Information acquirement is powerful. The newsroom staff should therefore afford the society to have the opportunity of seeing themselves as part and parcel of the African continent.

We come from an era where we were made to believe that we were one piece of country apart from Africa. It is the skills and capacity building that would make us understand that to become part and parcel of Africa is a clear indicator of the progress of democracy. A newsroom will dictate that an-depth assessment should be made of what the main issues are or could be. To get a positive response in acquiring information, one needs to have a knowledge, and this is my submission, Madam Chair, a knowledge of a language and its linguistic rules, that the listener, the viewer or a reader can understand.

Language is symbol of identity and forms an integral part of our social system, so limitations of language mastery are a problem in multilingual communities. It is therefore imperative for journalists to acquaint themselves with different languages and cultures. Our current major landscape requires that a conscious attempt needs to be made in order to improve our skills and capacity in the newsroom.

Yesterday, Mr Thloloe indicated or expressed a concern about the quality of graduates that tertiary institutions produce. We took note of that. In fact, the Department of Media Studies at the University of Limpopo has for the past four or five years engaged in a programme of attachment or internship with the SABC in the Limpopo region. We still need to tighten this relationship with the Regional Editor, News, Mr Manas Tshungu, present here. His support in this respect is very much appreciable. This relationship between the media schools and the media industry will also enable us to review our curricular on an ongoing basis. One hopes, Madam Chair, that this type of partnership in skills and capacity building will benefit us all as a society.

I'm sorry, I have to stop here.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you, Dr Kupa. In summary, ladies and gentlemen, you have heard our

panellists, Ms Paula Fray, indicating that there is a need for training, but that training needs to be targeted. She talked about the research that was done by SANEF which resulted in the development of learnerships for junior reporters. And she concluded by saying, instead of saying 'can we deliver', we should be saying 'how can we deliver'. So it means putting mechanisms in place in answering the question, 'how can we deliver'.

Dr Naves indicated that the skills development is out there to empower us, to develop the necessary skills. The Act has been there for about six years and there's even a human resources development strategy. So we have all these opportunities, but are we meeting the challenge? Are we opening up opportunities for our people according to the Labour Relations Act and also making use of opportunities afforded by the Skills Development Act and I'm also adding this MAP SETA there. There are programmes which our media houses can deliver and in turn, be refunded through MAP SETA.

Dr Kupa indicated, in summary, that our training institutions are there and partnerships by the training institutions such as the University of Limpopo and other media trainers, you know, partnerships with industry, will actually speed up the process of delivering the necessary skills. And the necessary skills are not just the superficial ones, how to write and report a story or event blow by blow, but it's also going deeper and also knowing media law, media ethics and all that stuff that we teach, we teach even media and society.

So we need reporters and journalists who can go deeper than that, who also know their rights. So in short, who can read more. He spoke about cognitive skills development, meaning, people who are there, constantly developing themselves through reading widely, that that kind of reading would make them even more capable of doing their jobs. He mentioned ICT, professionalism and others.

That is a summary of what this panel has said. In other words, answering that question, can the media deliver, I think they're saying yes, but raising the question: how can that be done?

At this time we have about 20 minutes, so we will request questions from the audience, but please do not make another speech, we don't have much time, we'll be finishing at 3.30. Thanks.

## **DISCUSSION**

**COMMENT:** I just want to ask a question about the use of the media in the classroom, given that at an educational level, at school level, we have already adopted a policy of using newspapers in the classroom and we've heard how ill-prepared these journalists are, and we have heard about dumping down. And now we talk about a multimedia classroom. So what I want to find out is, what impact is this kind of media environment going to have on the educational system as a whole?

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you, next one.

**COMMENT:** Okay, sorry. I've said this before when SANEF does its presentation, I must say it always staggers me that any organisation would go public with how badly they hired people. The accusation seems to be that tertiary educationists and I'm one of them, are turning out people badly. We turn out very good graduates every year. There are hundreds, if not thousands of good people, and one of the things I have to say is, are you paying enough?

None of you mentioned rewards, none of you mentioned career tracks. I don't think the media institutions are paying enough and I would hope SANEF would actually look at questions of career tracks, whether broadcasters as opposed to management people in the media industries are being rewarded adequately, what the kind of career training is.

You're also speaking for organisations where a lot of news people, news organisations were gutted of staff and you brought people into those news organisations. You know, it seems to me, it's chutzpah to kind of gut the news organisation and then complain it's not functioning. In terms of the cost cutting that happened in a wide range of media industries, I really think that SANEF is a bit naïve in its analysis. Talking from a tertiary education, you want people who could go into Law, could go into any of the other professions, but you want to pay them a quarter or a third of what they could get in comparable industries. I think when you start paying better, you'd find that a lot of these problems are actually quite fake problems.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you, sir. Yes, madam.

**MS LAGADIEN:** Thank you. I wanted to say that while we leave disabled people out of this training that we're doing, and I speak to all of us that are here in training and in media now, we cannot claim to be an inclusive society. We also cannot claim to be an information society when we choose to live blissfully ignorant about how to include disabled people in our training programmes.

I have heard this morning from some SABC people that they want to employ disabled people that come well recommended but they don't know how. They also don't have a budget for that and I think we need to open our eyes and ears and go and find the information, because there's not a lack of information in terms of how to include disabled people in our training, in our workplaces, and we must budget for it. It's not going to happen by itself and it does have a cost with it. But that should not be the reason why we don't employ disabled people or train disabled people.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you. Two more, there's one over there.

**MS UREN:** Hi. My name is Deirdre, I'm from the Eastern Cape. I'm in the fortunate or unfortunate situation that I'm in a hub of a number of educational institutions who churn out journalists on a yearly basis, who beat down my door looking for internships and looking for jobs, and unfortunately I have to disagree with you. I don't think that universities are actually producing the graduates that we need in the industry, at lot of the time.

Yes, there are a number that are exceptionally good and come highly recommended, but on an average basis, people coming to our offices with university degrees or diplomas looking for six-month internships and I ask the question, whose responsibility is it. We give them a six-month internship. Do we need then to ensure that when they leave us, they can use those skills or is it just simply to get their diploma at the end of the year.

My frustration is that often it's me that's required to write a letter at the end of six months to say, X, Y and Z has actually done six months' internship but there's been no feedback to the institution. The institution has asked for no feedback on that student, but in April of that year, they will graduate with a degree in that subject. And I feel that there needs to be a joint responsibility of media houses and tertiary institutions as to how do we get these interns to develop to the standard that we need them in the industry and also to the educational standards.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Okay, thank you, Ma'am. The last one, over there, then we get our responses from the Panel.

**MR DE BEER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm Ari de Beer from the Department of Journalism in Stellenbosch. One quick remark regarding the two SANEF audits and then four very quick questions to the Panel.

As far as the SANEF audits are concerned, I was very fortunate of being a co-researcher in those two audits, and to be a co-author as well of the reports. And those two reports are on this website of SANEF. So it's there for each and every one of you guys to go and look and have the

full report.

Madam Chair, coming from these two research projects, I might just want to add or just highlight four very quick issues that is not really in the report and did not get discussed as much. First of all, one of the main things that we found, talking to both news managers and journalists, was the question of the definition of news, something that we've been talking around for quite some of these last two days, and the problem is that reporters do not know who decides what is news - I'm talking especially of print news. In my days it was easy. I knew exactly, I was trying to think what the Editor thinks and I didn't want to be on the red carpet the next morning. These guys, young people coming in to work in the newsrooms, they don't know whether it's the Editor, whether it's the News Editor, whether it's the Financial Manager, or what we've heard from many people, maybe these overseas owners who decide really what news is. So this is one of the issues that really needs to get addressed and I'd like to hear the Panel's comments on that.

Then secondly, in terms of personal skills or person skills, one of the main problems that we found was the inter-linkage between being a reporter in a new environment and technological developments. Our old guys know when we wrote a story and all of the old people will tell you, you stayed with your story until it was clear, everything was okay, it was out, etc, etc. Due to technology, the story gets into the system and a reporter goes home. So we will need to talk and address the issue of responsibility and IT.

Thirdly, everybody was talking about juniorisation. I have a total different take on it. It's not about juniorisation, it's about idealism. There are no more real or very few real role models left in the media. Editors have told us so, journalists have told us so, and as long as the role models move out into fancy jobs with fancy 4x4 cars in government and elsewhere, young people are not going to find their feet. So I'd like to hear your views on the issue of role models.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you, sir.

**MR DE BEER:** Just two quick questions. The other one was about theory responsibility. My main gripe about people griping about universities; in all professions, professional people read and do research about their professions. We don't do that. As long as we don't know our theory, I've been listening for two days to people who could take a first year framework or handbook and get all of the answers that we've been talking about for two days. We need theory, we need publications and the publications are out there, Anton Harber's place: journalism.co.za, and at Rhodes, Journalism Review. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you very much, sir. Can anybody respond? Let's keep it short. We only have ten minutes to half past three.

**DR KUPA:** Madam Chair, could I respond on this issue of the output from tertiary institutions. We acknowledge the fact that universities do not operate in the way technikons do. Technikons apply a hands-on job type of training whereas universities are entirely academic with a practical component which is actually not as much accessible as it is in the case of technikons. However, the media landscape dictates to us now that we have to strike a balance, a balance between theory and practice. That is why our curricula are being reviewed to see how best possible we could empower students with the necessary skills and knowledge that they need for their daily job in the industry.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you, Dr Kupa. Yes, Dr Naves?

**DR NAVES:** I need to make two comments. The one is on resources for development, not only for disabled people but for everyone. The specific mention of the provisions of the Skills Act tells us that we have funding available. I think our challenge is to get ourselves better organised and put to full use the funds available.

My second comment is around whether or not universities and tertiary institutions are producing the right material. I just want to say that whether or not they do it, at the end of the day the extent to which we accommodate these young up and coming people in our workplaces, the extent to which we coach and mentor them and provide for an environment where they can learn is the extent to which we will succeed and I think that we need to apply the principle of everyone teaching one. Every individual taking the opportunity to mentor an up and coming journalist, reporter, you name it. I'm sure it's within our control and we can achieve the success we want to achieve.

**MS FRAY:** Thank you. I actually want to also address that question because I think that was directed at me, given that I spoke about the SANEF Skills Audit. I don't think the SANEF Skills Audit is pointing at any particular reason as to why this exists and it certainly did look at the issue of remuneration, because people brought that up quite a bit.

One of the things that we often forget is that journalism is too dynamic for a reporter to come there with their journalism degree or journalism diploma and to be set for life, and that the skills that you need are constantly changing. Just as the skills that they need when they come into the sector are constantly changing and so it's up to universities and technikons themselves to be looking at whether they are still relevant in the kind of skills they are giving the graduates that they're sending to newsrooms.

And certainly my experience as a news editor has been mixed. I have had times where I have appointed people because a particular university or technikon had a good reputation and I've had periods of time when I haven't - or I've appointed someone from that particular place and it's been a problem. But the point I'm making is that what's lacking from a training perspective is the ability to performance manage people, right from the process of mentoring and coaching, to the process of clearly articulating what their job expectations and competencies are supposed to be, to career development. And career development includes what we are paying them. Otherwise all the training we do, all the skills improvement we do goes into a black hole that serves no purpose whatsoever, if in fact they're not going back into an environment that has a structured strategy in place.

In terms of the definition of news, that's precisely why we're here, Ari, because the definition of news, the definition of what we have always said as being news is changing. We're trying to move away from a paradigm that said news was a particular thing. Joel made a very good point, he said that only when someone makes a statement do we write stories about the cost of telecommunications. If you look at the story structures we use, the inverted pyramid is by far the most popular in South Africa and in the SADC region. It is a story structure that demands a statement. Somebody said something yesterday. Is that story structure still valid if we want to move away from "he said" reporting?

If you look at who makes news on the African continent, it's politicians and people from a particular class, particular gender make news because we write stories about what people said. If we're going to write stories about how things impact on people, we need different story structures and I think these kinds of conferences are part of that process. If we want to tell the stories of all the people in South Africa, how are we going to be able to tell those stories.

From the gentleman over here who asked the question about using newspapers in classrooms; I think even with the changing media, newspapers still play quite a - and I speak as a print person first and foremost - newspapers will continue to play a very important role because they add so much value to what our children do in class. But if we're talking about what I am saying in terms of the skills levels in newsrooms, you know, they say you get the media you deserve. And quite frankly, I think I deserve a bloody good media and so when I set the bar, I set the bar high, and I think we should all be doing that. So when I talk about skills level, it comes from the point of view, I'm not satisfied with inaccuracies, I'm not satisfied with stories that are a half a story and that's why I make a point about it. If you're satisfied with it, fine, but I don't deserve that media, I

want better. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you very much. We will take another round of questions, of comments, five or six, and if you were part of the first six, please keep your hand down. Thank you.

**COMMENT:** Thank you. There's a great deal of training that goes on. Everywhere you look around, there's another course, or another this or another that. It's not quantity of training that's the problem, it's quality of the training, so I'm very pleased that a view was expressed, that what's being produced may not be what is needed, because that needs to be addressed.

I want to express a concern that I think we have to grapple with, as trainers and educators and journalists. You know, the tendency at the moment because of the criticisms that's being levelled at our profession and the media so often is that we list a set of ethical rules that journalists must behave, must follow. We're quite bureaucratic in our response about triple-sourcing and double-checking and processes and we're all involved in MAP and SETA processes that list long complicated outcomes. And my concern is that it's a bureaucratic response. All of those things may be important but they don't produce great journalists.

Nat Nakasa wasn't a great journalist because he followed a set of rules. I'm sure he did and I'm sure that was important to what he did, but he was a great journalist also because he broke rules. I visit many newsrooms and what worries me most is that a culture of probing, of criticism, of wanting to immerse oneself in a story, of being sceptical, of a passion to find a story that's not being covered and covered better than everyone else, that's what's most missing and that is something that's hard to address but something we do need to address. That kind of culture of journalism, I think, is frayed at the edges in many of our newsrooms.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you, sir. There's a hand at the back, ja.

**COMMENT:** Ja, I just wanted to address the extent, I just wanted to know in terms of what South Africa can benefit from other experiences in terms of skills from the rest of the media community in the continent. We have situations whereby there are - I'm aware that there is a growing population of displaced media professionals from Zimbabwe in this country. What can South Africa benefit in terms of deriving that experience, former Daily News workers, former ZBC workers who are here in South Africa. What is their role in terms of enhancing the skills capacity of this country?

To that extent, what is the other opportunity - there's another point about sharing experiences with those who are still based in the rest of the continent in terms of capacitating South African journalists.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Okay, thank you. There's another one in front.

**COMMENT:** Thank you, Madam. I just want to have one question that will contain a million questions. I want to check or to understand the destination of the industry of journalism or the vision and the mission of the journalists at large. Perhaps that might give us at least to understand pertaining to the society, where do you want to see this society heading to? Perhaps maybe before you even decided to have this gathering, you had something in mind that let's call a conference based on what we're thinking, to shape this society. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you. There was a lady there.

**MS MOKOENA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My name is Refilwe Mokoena from the firm Mokoena Msisa Attorneys. My remark is that in as much as institutional transformation is necessary, I feel it is equally important to focus on community transformation. A lot of our people in the society still lack the necessary skills, information and education to increase their participation in the crucial decisions that affect them. You know, it is the very participation that

we need to actually influence the policy formulation and if we don't look into community transformation, I feel that we are actually a step behind. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you very much. There's a hand over there.

**NALINI:** Hi, I'm Nalini from the SABC. I just wanted to just comment, I've been in this conference for two days now and I just have made an observation that we talk about skills and training, we talk about, you know, diplomas and degrees. I think that we must also remember that we deal with people on a daily basis. Journalists are not computers, you know, you punch keys and have an expectation. You are dealing with people and you need to remember that because as Dr Naves mentioned, the environment that we work in is actually plays an important role in terms of our people.

People management in terms of morale, of motivating our staff, of creating a conducive environment because the impression I get of print media journalists is working under pressure, even in our newsroom, in the broadcasting industry, is, it creates the impression of - and I haven't been working in that kind of pressurised environment, but I would assume that the pressure is really tremendous and something that we should be addressing is that we work with people. What are we doing for our people in order to get the outcome? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you, Ma'am. The last question from that gentlemen. That will be number six.

**COMMENT:** I have my doubts about universities' ability to produce journalists. Well, I'm not a product of university graduate school, that's probably why. But I just wondered maybe if Limpopo, Wits and UCT can help us. Can or do universities really produce good journalists or shouldn't we perhaps be looking at another model where universities perhaps work with newsrooms around the country and then find some other way of getting journalists, like good journalists into the craft. I'm just not sure if going to a university, get a certificate and you work in the newsroom is really the way to go. It seems to be what is happening now. What happened to the good Weekly Mail training programme, the Cadet School that the Argus and them ran; I don't know.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you, sir. We got your point. Will the Panellists answer these questions, the most important questions only. Okay, I withdraw that statement. Briefly answer every question that was asked.

**MS FRAY:** Shall I start? Thank you. Harvard University which is has the Nieman Fellowship for Senior Journalists, Prof Sabbert, the principal there, they don't have a journalism school and his theory is, when we asked why, he said because we teach them think, someone else can teach them to write, and that if you have a journalist who can think, it follows that that journalist will then be able to be a good journalist.

And so it certainly got me thinking about what makes a good journalist and what kind of skills they would have. But whatever you choose, I think the debate actually - and I hesitate to use the word, not useful, because I think for different people, different ways of training work. For some people, universities are good, for some people, the diploma is good. And I have a number of friends who have matric and who are excellent journalists and have the ability to think through issues and to write well. So perhaps that's something that tertiary education institutions can take up at a separate forum and look at it.

But certainly what we need are reporters that can make sense of very complex issues for people at a local level which brings me in a way, probably to one of the other questions, which is what can journalists learn from journalists in the region. I think one of the things that South Africa does really badly is regional reporting. We don't cover our region adequately, we don't cover SADC well enough. I'm just going to ask a question: who's the new Executive Secretary of

SADC? Do you know? One person. And really, it's a major organisation. It celebrated its 25th anniversary recently and the coverage in the local media was pathetic, absolutely pathetic.

And one of the things that newspapers in other countries do very well is grapple with these regional organisations and what they do and what purpose they serve. So certainly, I think that there's an element of that.

But reporters on the continent are all grappling with change, because the one thing that's happened is the impact of globalisation on local communities has been severe, whether it's a matter of loss of jobs or food security, there are a whole lot of issues that are happening because of the impact of globalisation that we're not even beginning to look at and that we should be looking at and I think everyone on the continent today is looking at that particular issue and that we can probably learn and share from each other. And obviously we have to learn from their experiences in terms of media freedom. Our media freedom, our Constitution is only as strong as we are. We have to constantly be going out there and making use of this and fighting for it.

I think I'll leave the other questions for them.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thanks, you're next, Dr Naves.

**DR NAVES:** I just want to comment on the question of vision and mission of media. I do not think that any single person here has an answer that is common to everyone and I believe that might be one of the reasons why we all are here. I'm suggesting that maybe we even need to come out of here saying, there's a need for us to craft a strategy going forward in terms of how we take care of a number of things that we've deliberated upon.

I need to say that I have praises for the organisers of this particular conference to the extent that they did not ignore the people's issues, but they actually put it on the agendas so that we can start deliberating on it. The future that we're talking about is already here and we cannot afford, you know, to waste any time any further, we need to get down to work and develop the skills of our people.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you, Ma'am. Dr Kupa?

**DR KUPA:** Madam Chair, I just wish to comment once more on this issue of whether any tertiary institutions are the ideal places to produce people for media work. Basically, that question can be posed with regard to any career in the world. So what we are concerned about here, is that we, at the universities pursue theory for the sake of practice, that's what we call *sanctio praxius*; we pursue theory for the sake of practice.

We empower a student to know all the dimensions of media work, media law, media ethics, media economics, you call them, so that these persons should have a broad idea of what media work is all about. Indeed, yes, we are in a changing media landscape and these processes are a challenge to us because even the levels of information appreciation are different from what they used to be. And it's good that it is like that, because that again, poses a challenge to us to keep on reviewing our curricula, to keep on seeing whether there is a link between *sanctio* and *praxius* in terms of reporting.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you, sir. Are there any burning questions? Nothing? Okay, CEO?

**MR MPOFU:** Thank you, Chair. Just a very small question. I think that this issue of academic training and it's maybe further exploration, because I have no doubt that there might well be a need for basic academic training for journalists and that's why I disagree with my colleague there. But where I agree with him is that the actual craft of journalism, even if you have the basic academic training, has to be learnt in practice. So it's a combination rather than an either/or

situation.

And just to share with him, that it's not just a matter of journalism. Any profession that I know of, you get your basic academic education, your grounding and so on. You know, I used to train advocates in my other life and I used to say to them on day one, the first lesson you must learn is that with all your LLB and B.Proc and all these nice things, if you don't learn lesson number one, that you know nothing about the practice of law, you're never going to make it. And that's actually so true. Anyone who's able to internalise that kind of truth at the beginning, is then able to learn. The university is there to make sure that you've got the basic skills and you've shown an ability to learn at a particular level and so on. But whether it's medicine or law or engineering and so on, the value of the sort of cadet kind of training and in-house training cannot be over-emphasised.

But the point I wanted to make which the Panel may answer or may not, is that, what can we learn from this experience of this conference? The Panellists themselves represent a partnership that produced this conference and my view is that the components of the partnership sitting there themselves can form another kind of partnership in the area of human capital development. So I would have like to hear the three of them, in fact to say, when they get off the stage, they should talk, the three of them, to say, okay, between the University, SANEF, SABC and maybe other institutions, what kind of partnerships in this area of human capital development can be formed.

We have a good example of course that some of our people in the newsroom took in conjunction with Wits University and some of them are here. They will tell you that they were sceptical about this idea and they went and they learnt just basic skills about South Africa; South African history, sociology, the political scenario and so on, with a partnership. Wits is five minutes drive from us at the SABC, so it's quite convenient, but so is the University of Limpopo from our other office, and so on and so on, across the country.

So this is the kind of thing that I think we should do more, where we have tailor-made courses for a particular block of six months or whatever. People might go on a Monday evening or whatever it is on a specific area, while they're working. I think that kind of model, using the very same partnership that we have for this conference, can take us far. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you, sir. That was a good conclusion. I see nods. Can we give a big hand to the Panellists.

**DR RENSBURG:** Okay, colleagues, while the next team comes up under Bro'Thami here, Dali and Bhekimpilo and Ou Bro'Joe, to reflect on the way forward, we just have for the Panellists and for the Chairs of sessions, we have a small gift on behalf of the partners. It's a sort of a big box but we just want to hand over to those who are here, the Speakers and the Panellists, just a small token of appreciation from the three partners. We can show you what it is, for those who were not speaking, it's not a secret, but it's just small token to say thank you very much, on behalf of the partners. So if you can please come forward.

**NTOMBELA-NZIMANDE:** I tried very hard to delegate this to upward to my boss, to do the rest of it, which was a hell of a brave thing to do on the second week of my starting at SABC, but he reminded me very quickly, he's instructing me to do this. So, without much further ado, if I could please call the following to come and get this token of appreciation from us. Prof Tswana Kupe, Fadila - it will also be taken to you, Mr Thami Mazwai, please sir, come over and take your gift. Prof Mmusi, Adv Mpofo, you've been thanked even before you speak. Dr Naves, please come close, and Prof Sibanda; Mr Thloloe, please. Thank you very much.

Ideally, each and every one of you should be getting a gift, particularly those who were here for the two days, but we just have to thank the speakers and the panellists.  
Thank you.

**SESSION FOUR:**

**CONFERENCE CONCLUSION**

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CHAIRPERSON: MR THAMI MAZWAI  
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**CHAIRPERSON:** Thank you very much. We have now come to the final session of the day and that is conclusions and the way forward. I think you all owe yourselves a round of applause for what has been a very successful conference. When we started, I pointed out the objectives of the conference and I believe we have exceeded those expectations.

Now I would just like to make a few brief remarks as to when the idea, when the concept took shape, just about five minutes and then Joe and my colleagues here will each take about five to seven minutes, so that by half past, we can be in our cars driving home.

Now, two years ago, I met with Joe and we were discussing the whole media landscape, what people were saying and not saying, and the point that I made and Joe agreed and added others, was perhaps we've got to take into account that when we formed SANEF, it was a coming together of the Black Editors Forum and the Conference of Editors and these were two specific entities that came together. And then we had the 1994 elections and we continued, but at no stage did we ever thoroughly examine what is it that brings BEF and the Conference of Editors together. Yes, it was a belief in the freedom of the media, but did we really break down the various components of the media to get a much more deeper understanding of what the unity was about?

Then, unfortunately, the idea never took shape and last year, when I had my 60th birthday - I'm sorry to tell you my age but I'm very proud of that - Joe, Eddie Funde and I developed this idea and said that there's one thing being part of the people who are throwing stones at journalists, that they don't know what they're doing, they're very ill-equipped and so on, but it's another thing to perhaps to get into the root of the problem, both at a philosophical level and a skills level, so that we can really make a proper contribution to the evolution of the media in our country.

What did we really mean? What we meant was that you do not transform society without getting deep into the various components that make up society. You do not transform the media without breaking it apart, looking at its components and then saying, this is what our understanding is of our mission in society, and the next person says the same thing. What Joe and I discussed then was that perhaps it is also necessary to bring society into this discussion so that society can then say, this is what we expect you people to do, this is what you people are doing and how can we bridge the gap.

Then, fortunately, I was able to go, during my active days as a journalist, I went to a workshop for managing editors in the United States, at Restan. There I found that a lot of American newspapers were faced with the challenge of communities that they operated in, losing confidence in the media and saying all sorts of things. They then decided that they are going to call meetings at the town council, at the town hall and so on, to discuss with societies what they were about. As a result of this, there was a better understanding of what the media was about.

I then knew that perhaps we are not under those pressures in South Africa but the concept is the same. Because what the concept says is that you go back to the society, they give you a mandate, and you go back to them to go and renew that mandate. And when you renew that mandate it will be a sign of the confidence that society has in you. This is what, for the past two days, we have done. We have had people coming out of the industry who said: these are our concerns.

But the most important thing for me was the actual self-interrogation that happened. We had

journalists, people, leaders of newsrooms, saying perhaps we could do better if we do things this way. How many times do we address the issue of poverty yet this is the biggest challenge facing our society. Once journalists start saying that to themselves, it is quite clear now that we are now meeting the challenge that comes from our societies. I am not in any way suggesting that we have been irrelevant but all that I'm saying is that we are now beginning to be much more sharper in our appreciation of our role and responsibility to society. So in that respect, I'm very happy that we have at least addressed that specific issue.

Then the second issue that we addressed, of course, was basically the interaction that we had with the people whose interests we purport to serve. For as long as you are an institution, you are a body, you are an organisation, it is always important to get people to tell you what they think of you, than for you to keep on having a post-mortem and saying you are doing a great job. Because when you say you are doing a great job, you are giving yourself the type of report that you always want to hear. But when you get people to tell you what they think of you, for the first time you are holding a mirror up to your face, and in that respect, I believe that all of us benefited.

Then the last point that I would like to make is that I was quite excited by the extent the way in which the philosophical issues surrounding the media were entered into. The whole debate about the Afrocentricity and Eurocentrism, there was much more honesty and none of us were protecting particular positions. Instead, all of us are going to leave here knowing what that person means when he says this. And this is the essence of the freedom of expression, this is the essence of the freedom of the media, the ability to hear what other people are saying and to express it in your pages or to internalise it yourself.

So I believe that just those three points, as far as I'm concerned, really have made this a very ground-breaking conference and I believe that when we have our next one next year, the argument is going to be, where are we going to have it? Are we still going to have it in Johannesburg, are we taking it to Cape Town, are we taking it to Durban? But already, I can speak on behalf of my colleagues at the SABC and many of them were here, that we are very excited with what has happened and we believe that there is no doubt that we are going to endorse another conference of this nature because it's an initiative of three organisations and we believe that for us to have the next one, we are ready to endorse it, but our partners will also obviously have their own meetings, assess the Conference and, if they are happy with it and they want the concept to continue, we'll be only too happy to tag along.

With those few words, I would like to also, in closing, thank Ihron and his team for really having worked, I'd use strong language if I was in a shebeen with friends, to express how hard they worked, but I leave that to your imagination. But I think that they worked very hard to bring us altogether and for us to have this type of conference. So let's give Ihron and his team a round applause.

With those few words I would like to call on Joe to perhaps have a few words to round off.

**DISCUSSION ON THE WAY FORWARD**  
**PANELLIST**  
**Mr Joe Thloloe**

Thanks, Thami. For me, there was one theme that ran through this Conference and the theme was, who are we and what do we stand for? I think we got a chance in the last two days to reflect on that question, from the broad debates about the Constitution, about changes of mindset, about taking on the revolutionary agenda. That seems to be the theme running throughout the Conference. And at the end of it, it boils down to, who is a journalist and what does he stand for? Somebody mentioned great and conspicuous consumption. Is that what motivates journalists today? Is it something bigger?

I think these are the questions that keep coming in my mind, as we go home now. For me, it's not a coincidence that we met here. Throughout last year SANEF had a series of seminars where we were looking at our performance, as media, in the last ten years. We grappled with the same issues that we were grappling with today. I think it was Joel who said there are no answers to this thing, you cannot get a resolution, but you constantly go back to those questions. In fact, we will be publishing a collection of the results of our reviews, I believe in the first week in November we will be publishing a CD which brings together the discussions that we had. We constantly have to ask these questions.

The other thing that came out for me, that kept niggling at us, was the question of commercial imperatives or the bottom line. To what extent does the Rand drive journalism today? It's a whole set of issues around that question, the so-called juniorisation of the newsrooms - I know you hate that expression. I think somebody else during question time here mentioned the fact that perhaps the industry isn't paying its journalists what it should be paying them. Is it only a question of money? Is it something deeper than that?

Again, this is a question that SANEF has been grappling with because the truth is that we have a very strange structure in our newsrooms. We've got the layer at the bottom, people with 2 or 3 years experience. Then we've got a layer at the top, people with 20/30 years experience, all the old men like me. But the middle has been denuded completely. Immediately the 3/4/5 year olds are able to walk, they walk to government and they start working for government, or they walk into public relations offices and they become public relations officers.

It's an issue that we haven't tackled, and in March next we're hoping to hold a meeting, media owners, media managers and editors, looking at whether - I mean, taking introspection again, as the industry, and saying is the bottom line, the search for the bottom line, is that in fact deploying quality in our newsrooms? The people at the top are overworked and they spend their time trying to repair what the juniors are doing. They don't have time for creative work, they don't have time for the journalism that this Conference demanded. It's a very sad state.

The question of skills also came up at various times during our Conference and SANEF has been hacking away at this issue. In conjunction with Rhodes University, we have been involved in several colloquia, where we were looking at what the training institutions are doing, where the gaps are, why the industry is still complaining about the products of the universities and the technikons. It's an area again where we need to continue working very hard.

But finally, let me say that Joel was right, media is an area of contestation, there will always demands on us. The lady from the Child Abuse group or the lady from the SACP or the man from the PAC, will all demand a piece of us and ours is to be sensitive to what all the stakeholders demand of us. That is one of the underlying themes behind media freedom is your freedom. One of the issues we set ourselves to do was to look at, are we in fact deserving this position that we have been by society, are we serving society? That's why we said it needs to be a dialogue between the media, our readers, our viewers and our listeners, as well as the subjects of our stories. So it's going to be an ongoing dialogue that we are looking at.

But finally I'm delighted that we could have this particular Conference, because it brought together all the stakeholders. In the media we were forced into reflecting about ourselves and our performance by crisis. In 2000 we had the Human Rights Commission enquiring into the media and that gave us a jolt and we started looking at ourselves for a while. The Hefer Commission again gave us a jolt and we started looking at ourselves. But we haven't gone out on our own to say, what are we, as an industry, doing? How are we performing? Who are we and what do we stand for?

Before 1990, it was very clear what we stood for. You either stood for apartheid or you stood against apartheid and you put your resources into fighting that. We all had a mission. Today's journalists find that that motivation, that mission, has been dissipated, now look at the type of

cars they will be able to drive if they join your organisation. They look at the types of houses they will be able to occupy if they work for your organisation.

We need to go back to understand who we are and what we stand for and I think this is just the beginning of that process; some of the subjects we need to drill into at other conferences, where we cut this down into little slices, that we can tackle thoroughly.

Thank you.

**PANELLIST**  
**Prof Bhekimpilo Sibanda**

Thank you very much, Thami. I really had bad company during lunch - yesterday I told you how I had bad company the previous night. I left my notes on my table as I was going to get my food and Joe and Thami did look at them and managed to take most of my points. And as I was engrossed in Thami's speech and Joe's speech, Dali was busy copying my notes.

What this means is that I've very little to say, save to say that we are absolutely thankful to SABC and our colleagues, SANEF, for spreading the idea around. Sometimes if you have a wonderful idea, you want to keep it in your pocket and you don't want anybody else to see, but these organisations have been able to invite universities to say, let's come and share, and we have been extremely willing partners.

I would like to thank the SABC Board and to thank the staff, Dali Mpfu's staff, they gave me an example of the kind of people I think I need to have at a university. Thank you very much. And Sheila Mmusi, Prof Sheila Mmusi's my witness, I'm saying this very honestly.

Just a few points. I really think that these guys have said almost everything, but I would like to say that we have put our pebbles on the table, we have talked about neo-colonialism, colonialism, *makwerekwere* and the like. Those of us who are *makwerekwere* and so on, let's not take it personally. Those of us who are white or black, let's not take some of this personally. One of the things which has been a problem everywhere is that we all, in conferences, genuinely appear to be agreeing, to be supportive of each other. And then we come out, even before we go away, just running into the gents or ladies, you start saying the real things about other people.

I think it's important that perhaps for a start, let's come out of here and be honest about what we've been saying and say, whether you are white, whether you are black, I think perhaps in the media we are really starting and having a new beginning. It's very tempting all the time to be beginning, but I think some of the hatred which we have, which we show, which we dispel in our writings, in our media, comes from within our newsroom. Sometimes we hate each other so much in the newsroom itself.

This is why, perhaps, you should forgive me for today for being defensive of my students and saying, I don't like this thing about juniorisation. Because prejudice starts that way, if you hide it behind something else, you don't really say, look, we don't like people who have degrees because we haven't got. You know, you paint it nicely, you say it nicely and so on. Oh, okay, those of us who have no degrees, including myself, let's be honest to ourselves and have a new beginning.

We have seen all over the world the merging of institutions, the merging of technologies, we are now talking about convergence of the media. And sometimes we do ask a question: does this convergence of the media not represent something, convergence of philosophies in our minds. We forget that. We just think it's convergence of radio, audio and vision, but our minds too are affected by what is happening in our physical environment.

May I invite you to say, as we go away, let's think about next year. There have been very positive comments that perhaps next year we need to focus a little bit. The Conference was a bit too broad and indeed it was a fishing expedition, in order to see if issues can come out and indeed they have come out.

And may I say, the issue raised by the Panel in the afternoon, it's very, very interesting and we should think about. Prof Tuwana Kupe mentioned something about entertainment and most of us were very negative from yesterday, talking about dumping and so on. But entertainment is now taking over as the major industry in the world. Perhaps we might need to relook at our thinking, reposition our thinking for next year, to say rather than what is this entertainment, but to say how do we contain it, how can we use it to lead fuller lives? Because I think entertainment is a very important part of the media. How can we bring it to the fold, how can we use it for fuller lives. Perhaps the Sun is not such a good idea; I don't know. I'm beginning to change, vacillate between one point and the other because of the comments, wonderful comments, which were made here. So perhaps let's think about that for next year.

The other question is about research, it has been mentioned here. Those who have done research know, particularly the scientists, the physical scientists whom perhaps we might have a few here, it is very important sometimes to replicate research. In Limpopo I had a comment one time when we were giving a workshop and they said, ha, do you know some of these figures which are used, we don't know where people get them from.

You know, for example, they say that we, in Limpopo, hardly eat rice. It's there in the research, and somebody was very angry about that. They said that the people who eat rice and drink Coca Cola and so on, make a particular cohort of viewers. The people in Limpopo were saying, what nonsense.

Perhaps we may want to think about strategies of replicating some of these things, asking certain groups of people. I've learnt something from this Conference, not only academics, but the groups, you know, from industry, from so on, to say, okay, two or three people, can you conduct some research, replicate this research, the figures Joe has been reading. Can you, four, except Dali, of course, three of us, go out there and say - because Dali is the one who will be asking us to give him the figures, it wasn't that I don't like him at all - it's important, some of these figures come from a history which we are trying to forget, but they keep popping up, because these researchers we think are researchers, sometimes have no time, they have taken shortcuts. They can't get to Bolobedu, it's too difficult to go there, so they just phone somebody to give them something about what people eat out there. So perhaps it's very important to think about this.

Some of the issues have been mentioned: systematic student placement, it's very important. The idea of a technikon, by the way, is dying, everywhere. Look at the UK and how many universities, many people used to go Southampton Polytech. If you go to London looking for Southampton and North London Polytech, it's no longer there. Something is happening. Are we just painting over and then writing university over the term and never changing the content? The content, the quality can only come with this kind of partnership, where those who are outside say, look, your door is not closed, can you close it and so on. So let's strengthen these partnerships, let's find new ways of creating new curricula. Media and society itself needs to be really interrogated.

In South Africa we know and many parts of Africa, that for a long time, even the text books which are available have certain ideologies which need to be revisited, need to be interrogated, some of them are very, very stale, they need to be thrown out. So it is important that we keep on sharing ideas and so on, making our education relevant, making our training relevant.

Those of you are old enough, you will remember, I trained as a teacher in the late '60s and we almost, all of us, could not get jobs because we were the first group to train for three years,

training as a primary school teacher used to be just two years. All the old teachers - that's why I have a phobia about hating young journalists - they said these are useless - and most of us had done O-Level and trained for three years. And we were dealing with headmasters who had done Standard 6 and trained for two years and they thought we were the worst things to come to the education system. So it's very important to be a little bit objective about our views about each other.

And finally, can we genuinely, in this room, accommodate each other; genuinely in this room, not say that one is *makwerekwere*, that one is white, that one is Venda. If we can, as media people, genuinely try and kill this spirit ourselves, then we will be going forward.

Thank you very much.

**CHAIRPERSON:** Dali?

**PANELLIST**  
**Mr Dali Mpofu**

Thank you, Chair. I think before we stop pointing fingers, let me be allowed one chance to do so. You know, the Professor speaks about people who took his notes. I can understand, because I have this similar problem. But, for me, I blame myself, because I left my notes and the two gentlemen there are from Soweto, so obviously - talk about stereotyping. Obviously, they found ways. But what I didn't foresee, because I could understand them, what I didn't foresee is that with the gentleman from Limpopo, without touching my notes, he sent some lightning and I was dazed for a few minutes there. Now there's a headline for the Sun!

Now, you know, the fact that this thing takes place today, the 19th October, 28 years ago this day was called Black Wednesday. I remember it very, very clearly, for some reason, I don't know what was wrong with me but I went to the hospital in East London, Frere Hospital, and on my way there I was confronted by this huge billboard, "Woods Banned", that's what is said; big letters. Now that billboard on its own can be a subject of some academic research, whether this was about Donald Woods or not, but that's what the billboard said.

Another funny about story about that day is that, when I saw this, I immediately rushed to the shop at the hospital to buy the Daily Despatch and I think in my frenzy to see what had happened, I went to the white side of the shop and I was told, no, I had to go the back. But because of this news and the mood of the '70s, I refused and I managed to get my newspaper from the front door.

That was the banning of many organisations, the most vicious assault on media freedom. I think it was very creative for the organisers to have this reminder, triumphant reminder, if one may say that, of that day in contrast to today. I think that anyone on Black Wednesday would have said that we would be sitting here 28 years later, grappling with the issues that we touched on today and yesterday, would have been dismissed as a fake of a fortune teller.

That, for me, is important, because if we don't know where we're coming from in the context of this, we can't, by any stretch of the imagination, answer the crucial question. Who are we, who indeed are we, as South Africans, as Africans? I think that the fall of apartheid ten/eleven years ago punctuated a very significant momentous occasion on this continent, in this country obviously, but also on this continent, where the last vestiges of institutionalised racism and colonialism were on that day taken out of our history, as a continent. And it's appropriate for us to sit here and examine what has happened since then.

I think that it was also appropriate that with the fall of apartheid, we started what call an African Renaissance and this part of what we are about here today. I don't know if Prof Kupa is still here - oh, he's gone - because I wanted to show him it's not his duty to quote the Latin terms. I'm the

only lawyer here so I should be the one who quotes Latin. I was going to say, you know, renaissance, the word renaissance really comes from the Latin term, *nascitur*, which is to give birth, to be born. So African Renaissance really means the rebirth of the continent. But that rebirth obviously is metaphorical. It's a rebirth which is not a birth where we forget where we come from. It's a rebirth from what to what? That is the same as the topic of this Conference, which is the transformation, we have to know what we are transforming from and to what.

Now, I'm not by any stretch of the imagination, a journalist, never have been, never will be. What I am, apart from a professional manager, is a lawyer and for me, the approach that I take to the issues that we grappled with the past two days, obviously, have to come from that background. And therefore, the human rights and constitutional approach to the issue of media freedom is something that we need to look into very deeply. Because the human rights approach says that freedom of expression and freedom of the media are but one aspect of freedom *per se*. Freedom itself is indivisible. We are able to, for conceptual reasons, to package it in these various clauses and so on, but freedom is one thing.

Therefore, it's important to take the human rights approach that says that unbalanced news, lack of access and all those issues, are actually deprivation of human rights. These are not human rights that fell from the sky, you know, this Constitution didn't just one day drop out in Kempton Park. It is a result of the struggles of people who produced that Constitution and that freedom package, if you like. That, I think is important for us to keep at the back of our minds as we debate these issues.

Freedom and human rights, in my first course in law would also go with obligations. It's an important issue that we need to confront, as the media. It's all very well to define the rights but we also need to define the obligations. What obligations do we actually owe to society that go with these rights that we talk about? That maybe is a topic for a workshop of its own.

We've spoken about dignity. The law on defamation traces itself on the right or the protection of the dignity of the human being. The reverse of that is that we have a duty, as journalists, to promote dignity, more so in this country, where the struggle was essentially about the restoration of dignity of the people.

So the next point I really want to talk about is this thing of victim-hood, that's another paradigm shift we have to move away from. Maybe it is true that in a particular era the media were victims of some sustained assault from the government and other institutions, but have we actually woken up to the idea of how we respond to a government that actually promotes and supports freedom of expression, what do you do now? Do you continue to take a victim kind of stance of being under siege, some siege that might or might not be there, or do you actually look into the issue of the assault on media freedom, if there's any, from even other quarters of society?

Then the issue of professional ethics, coming from the background that I come from, I cannot accept that anything that is called a profession can operate without a well-known - not just by itself but by society - set of ethical rules and rules which you cannot even violate, even in your wildest dreams. You can't have a free for all of trial and error when you are wielding some of the most powerful tools that society has ever designed. This is something that needs to be addressed in a very big way.

I think it was Prof Karikari who said that making an example of another country, it was in a no war, no peace situation. And I wanted to extend that notion by saying that freedom is not the absence of apartheid, freedom is not the absence of colonialism. Freedom is a positive thing that we have to breath into this wonderful Constitution that we have. And our duty to the poorest of the poor is that much more exaggerated than it is to those of us who might buy five Sunday newspapers and watch 50 channels and so on. It is the right for people to be informed about what is happening to their lives, so that they can make informed choices; is something that is fundamental.

Because what is democracy if it is not participatory democracy and the exercise of choice? And the exercise of choice is not once in five years putting an "X" on a piece of paper, it is the exercise of choice on a daily basis, options, whether to do this or to do that, to move, to live here or not to live here, to buy this or not to buy that and so on. That is what democracy is about and if we say the media is about the promotion of democracy, it must be about accessing those functions to society.

Another important thing that really worried me was the statement, which is true, that going back to this thing of who are we - being African means that you belong to a continent or a people who have been regarded as inferior by everybody else in the world. That is a serious issue of identity. However collective continental self-esteem we might have to muster, it has to come against that background. It has to come against the background that this continent, every piece of it, except for a few countries, was colonised by one European country or another at some stage. That is why we are having this discussion here in English. That's why we're even having it here in this place called Johannesburg, and we have to grapple with those issues.

The issue of language is the key issue and if the good suggestion of unpacking some of these into smaller workshops and conferences is going to be taken up, I would say that the first one we should tackle is the issue of language. It's a difficult intractable problem. It's one that may not be resolved in our lifetime, as we sit here, but we cannot shy away from it just because it's difficult. If this continent is talking to itself in foreign languages, even to resolve its problems and to define its identity, are we saying that in a thousand years time that should also still be the case? If not, whose responsibility is it to start the debate and to make sure that we address those issues? And what other institution on this continent has got more power than the media to start those kinds of debates and start shaping the answers and providing those answers?

The African values of solidarity, communalism and collectivism have got to be breathed into this debate. And I want to end by referring to Prof Francis Nyamnjoh's very interesting book where his thesis is really that the notion of liberal democracy is not suitable for African conditions and I'd like us to examine that statement in the next conference. Because the individualism and self-centredness of that paradigm is actually not what, if we really are about defining an African identity, it's not what we can even use as a starting point. In fact, it's the kind of thing we should unlearn before we fashion any African identity.

I'd like to quote Prof Nyamnjoh very shortly, a very interesting part. He's a very colourful person, I'm sorry you didn't get the best of him today, I think he was too worried about this *makwerekwere* problem. But we're going to invite him maybe to do a tour and discuss some of these issues. He's one of the most illustrious examiners of the issues we are talking about. He says in this book - this book, by the way, I've been reading for the past couple of weeks and I've quoted in many places. But one of the most interesting things about this book is that there's a sort of graffiti on the front that says: "Unbalanced news is also a human rights abuse." One of the best expressions, I don't know where he got this. But just allow me shortly to quote this part. He says:

"It is common to claim that liberal democracy and Africa are not good bedfellows and how apt. Implementing liberal democracy in Africa has been like trying to force onto the body of a full-figured person, rich in all the cultural indicators of health with which Africans are familiar, a dress made to fit the slim, defleshed, Hollywood consumer model of a body model, entertainment icon. But instead of blaming the tiny dress or its designer, the tradition has been to fault the popular body or the popular ideal of beauty, for emphasising too much bulk, for parading the wrong sizes, for just not being the right thing."

This is what we have to grapple with. We cannot try and fit in a model in this setting that is actually, by definition, foreign to the received values of this society. This is something once

again which is not going to be resolved tomorrow but which we have to start in this kind of conversation to address.

Thank you very much.

## **CLOSURE** **Mr Dali Mpofu**

Okay, thanks. I'm wearing another hat, this is my moment in glory. The vote of thanks was supposed to be done by the Deputy Chair of the SABC and she asked me to do it, so this is a five-minute promotion for me.

I think really one has to start with the SABC staff that persuaded many people to do this, just because, you see, in the SABC we have an opinion survey, so one of the questions is: how do you see the CEO? So I have to start with them. And Ihron's team, all the SABC people who are here, I'll remember all of you, I've been watching all of you, I know the bonus time is coming just now.

But, I think, more seriously, our partners, SANEF, as an organisation that has really spearheaded this kind of debate, were very, very instrumental in making it happen. University of Limpopo, I think, for me, the most important thing about the University of Limpopo is the fact that they are here. The fact that we've showcased the country, that there is a school, a media studies school in Limpopo and a school from which we hope that some of the products are sitting here - welcome to the students and I think we have to raise our hands and thank them as well - will be the future Thami Mazwai's and Joe Thloloe's of tomorrow.

These are the people who really have to infuse some, more than the Shwashe's of this world, we have to infuse into the debate the restlessness of the youth and be able to take from these stalwarts who are sitting here, you know, the fountain of experience. And I'd like to thank you, Bra'Joe and Prof, for being such good partners.

I think there's no doubt that this partnership is going to continue, there's no doubt that we will have this conversation again next year. But I'm so enthused by what happened here that I really that we must foster, this debate does not wait for another year, that we do what Bra'Joe was saying, of having pockets of some of - we can't resolve all the problems of the world in one day. We can pick out three or four issues that came out of here and make sure that we go much deeper into them between now and the next conference next year. So that when we start, we start from a platform of some kind of report from those interactions.

But I think we also have a duty, as the SABC, as other institutions, to have the debate internally within our own institutions and really tease out this. This actually cannot be an annual debate, it can't be a monthly debate, it should be a daily debate, it should be something that we live through; what is the role of the media in advancing our democracy? We should not be able to go to bed without finding some answer to this question. But to get there, it means that we have to serialise and break down and so on.

So I really would like to thank all of you, the service providers, you, the die-hards who have been here to the last minute, I think you deserve a special round of applause. Please travel well and we promise that next year it's going to be much more dynamic. If we could achieve this level of participation, this level of depth in our first conference, it means that next year I really think that the sky is the limit.

Thank you very much.

Sorry, before you go, I really have to do this. After all these thank you's, I think if there's one person to be singled out, it must be uBra'Thami. You don't know how many fights he has fought

and begged and when the begging was not working, he would swear and do everything to make this happen. I think we owe it to him. Thank you.

**CONFERENCE CLOSED**