

SANEF MEDIA STATEMENT FOLLOWING AGM OF THE SA NATIONAL EDITORS' FORUM (SANEF)

The South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF) at its Annual General Meeting in Durban on 27 June 2009, expressed its deep concern about the ongoing crisis at the SABC and called on parliament and Government to restore stability, credibility and sound financial capacity at the public broadcaster as a matter of great urgency. Sanef appealed to the relevant role players to urgently put in place the appropriate governance and management structures and disciplines in order for the SABC to fulfil its mandate as public broadcaster. Sanef believes that the selection of SABC board members should be reviewed to avoid party political influences and ensure greater civil society participation. Another factor that needs to be reconsidered is the political deployment of executives to the SABC. Sanef furthermore lauded editors, journalists and other staff at the SABC who continue to do their jobs under extreme trying circumstances.

Sanef restated its serious concern with the media accreditation demands from PR agencies, sport bodies and celebrity gatekeepers. Sanef regards this as unacceptable and resolved to continue working with local and international partners to oppose this unhealthy phenomenon. Sanef regards this development as a threat to media freedom and the public's right to know.

Sanef restated its concern about the Reserve Bank Governor, Mr. Tito Mboweni's, continued refusal to allow photographers to photograph him at his press conferences, despite appeals to him in this regard. SANEF has resolved to ignore this refusal and encourages editors to continue sending photographers to the press conferences held by the Governor following the bank's monetary policy meetings.

At the AGM the Press Ombudsman, Mr. Joe Thloloe, called on editors to be more cautious about using unnamed sources and more fully embrace the prominent publication of apologies as ruled by his office. Sanef gave strong acknowledgement of the importance of his work to maintaining the credibility of the press.

The AGM debated the crisis facing newspapers all over the world, including South Africa. Sanef resolved to work for the entrenchment of journalism in the face of the global financial crisis and the challenges of the rapidly advancing digital era.

Sanef strongly condemned the violations of press freedom in the Gambia, Somalia and Eritrea.

Sanef has agreed to develop handbooks for multimedia reporting, coverage of parliament, and the local government elections in 2011.

At a prestigious function last night, with Pres. Jacob Zuma as keynote speaker, the award winning photographer Greg Marinovich was announced as the winner of the 2009 Nat Nakasa Award for courageous journalism. The SANEF-WROTTESELEY Award, a peer recognition award, has been presented to Mathatha Tsedu, former editor of City Press and head of Media24's journalism academy, for extraordinary commitment to the achievement of Sanef's goals.