

## Milestone in African broadcasting history

The world's first international business news channel, CNBC Africa, began broadcasting last week, Friday 1 Jun 2007, from its Sandton studios in Johannesburg. The sumptuous launch was attended by South African President Thabo Mbeki, several dignitaries, CEOs, SABC's head of news and current affairs Snuki Zikalala and important figures of local business such as Basetsana Kumalo and Zandile Nzalo, and former beauty queens Thuli Sithole and Kershnie Naicker.



Bylssa Sikiti da Silva 4 Jun 2007

"Today we are witnessing history being made in Africa," CNBC Africa Chairman Zafar Siddiqi told journalists at the media briefing shortly before the 7pm presidential launch.

"This is a culmination of a long and hard journey in the past two and half years and I believe that we must celebrate because it is an important milestone in African broadcasting history.

"The channel's vision is to bring the wider community to learn about business. Our aim is to provide a platform for the ongoing inter-African discussion on globalisation, employment, career, business and investment opportunities, living standards, infrastructure development and other relevant issues.

### Challenge starts on Monday

"Please give us more time. Our biggest challenge only starts on Monday [today], when you will start to see things you have never seen and never heard on TV because CNBC Africa has something unique," Siddiqi added.

From 7pm, President Mbeki participated in a live session, during which he answered various questions from business and political influential people from around the world. The Q&A presidential show was presented in the studio by Lerato Mbele and from the floor by Peter Ndoro, CNBC Africa's current director of communications.

Note that Mbele and Ndoro are both former employees of the SABC, which also 'transferred' anchors Mandlakazi Mpahlwe, Nikiwe Bikitsha, Fenly Foxen and Leigh Roberts to CNBC Africa.

CNBC Africa's CEO Trevor Ormerod said: "We will broadcast local content from our offices in Joburg, taking feeds from our bureaux in Cape Town, Lagos, Nairobi and Abuja."

Further African bureaux will be established on a roll-out basis, Ormerod said, adding that regional programming will include in-depth analyses of regional and major international stock exchanges, business and political updates and interactive talk shows.

### Almost all African countries

Furthermore, Siddiqi said that by 2009 CNBC Africa will be able to link to almost all African countries, with countries such as the DRC, Mauritius and probably Tanzania figuring in the top list.

The channel has been signed up as the exclusive broadcaster of the World Economic Forum Africa Summit, due to open in Cape Town, SA, on 13 June.

Asked if the launch of CNBC Africa could have an impact, on one way or another, on Al-Jazeera – which began showing its news channel in SA the day before on 31 May – Siddiqi said: "Not at all. We have a good relationship with Al-Jazeera and do not see them as our rival. Besides, we both have totally different markets."

CNBC Africa is accessible on DSTV's channel 54, as well as free-to-air across SA, and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa on

Sentech Vivid platform.

The function launch was made possible by Standard Bank, Motorola, Sasol and the IDC, which owns close to 30% of CNE Africa.

## ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa; work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.  
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