

Govt, Sanef commit to closer ties

Government and the South African National Editors Forum (Sanef) have resolved to work closely together for the good of the country. The two parties held their annual meeting on Friday and Saturday in Magaliesburg.



The meeting coincided with the 35th anniversary of Black Wednesday, when on 19 October 1977 the apartheid state gagged all media deemed to be promoting the struggle for democracy in the country.

According to a joint statement by Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe's office and Sanef, "Both parties committed to work closer together to strive to improve performance of the country."

The meeting concentrated on key policy issues and the overall direction in which the country was moving, with a commitment to foster a free and prosperous nation.

Government shared a range of information and insights with the country's editors on the global economic crisis, recent economic trends, infrastructure development, the Gauteng Freeway Improvement Project and the National Development Plan.

Speaking at the opening the meeting, Motlanthe acknowledged the role media play in society and in projecting the South African story.

Government also welcomed steps taken by print media, through the work of the Press Council review process and of the Press Freedom Commission, to move from a system of self-regulation to one of independent co-regulation.

For its part, "Sanef called on government to repeal or amend apartheid-era laws that are still in force and which, in Sanef's view, unjustifiably restrict the free flow of information".

Cabinet indicated that work in this regard had already started and both parties committed to expediting the process, the statement added.

The meeting noted the Constitutional guarantees on freedom of expression, including freedom of the press, which were part of the democratic dispensation and committed to deepening democracy.

Cabinet undertook to make information available to editors to enable the media to inform the public and empower the people to hold government accountable, the statement said.



(Image: GQIS)