

Zuma says transformation needed in media sector

President Jacob Zuma says amendments to the Employment Equity Act and the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act should pave the way for transformation in the print media in the country.



President Jacob Zuma calls for greater transformation of the media sector.
Image: GCIS

Speaking at the launch of the Independent Newspapers and Media SA (INMSA) under new ownership in Cape Town, President Zuma said the amendments to the Employment Equity Act should encourage the industry to diversify newsrooms.

"We need a media sector that is an accurate mirror of ourselves regardless of race, colour, gender, class, creed or geographical location. A media sector that will tell the full South African story and balance the challenges we face of unemployment, inequality and poverty, with the remarkable achievements that the country has also scored," he said.

The President noted that while the broadcasting news arena was transforming, the print media sector was still lagging behind.

"With regards to ownership, the print media is still dominated by the 'big four' - Caxton, Naspers, Independent News and Media SA and the Times Media Group.

Limited ownership

"The Print and Digital Media SA reported in 2011 that only an average of 14% of ownership of the mainstream print media is in black hands, and that women participation in board and senior management is limited to 4%."

Zuma said the sale of INMSA to the Sekunjalo Consortium was a step in the right direction and would contribute to the

important national task of promoting the diversity of ownership, content, management and staffing.

"We are confident that the change in ownership will result in a more indigenous look and perspective in the content of the Independent media products nationwide," he said.

He added that the media industry itself is an economic sector and critical contributor to job creation and the national wealth, which stands at more than R3.5trn.

In the spirit of the theme of his 2014 State of the Nation Address, Zuma said South Africa had a good story to tell and the media needed to help tell these stories.

"If we do not tell this story ourselves and instead choose to be overly-critical and paint a wrong picture that our country is failing when it is not, we are doing South Africa and South Africans who work hard, a huge disservice," he said.

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