

## Media freedom addressed at BBC Africa Business Report launch

DStv held a breakfast launch for the BBC's World News Africa Business Report in Parktown on Tuesday, 7 September 2010, hosted by BBC's Komla Dumor. Speaking at the event, Govan Reddy, former SABC radio head, indicated that the Media Appeals Tribunal could inflict irreparable damage on South Africa's image as a nation that champions free speech.



Former SABC radio head Reddy said the tragedy of what was happening in South Africa should be seen in light of the drawing up of "one of the finest" Constitution's in the world in 1994 to the nadir brought about by the mooted media tribunal.

"The longer government has been in power, the greater the corruption, and media has played a pivotal role in exposing what was happening. On top of that in President Jacob Zuma we have a leader who is ultra-sensitive to media exposure, which is why he is an advocate of the new legislation," he said. "But what we have is beyond corruption, it is looting," Reddy said.

He added, however, that tension between the government and the media was a necessary, healthy sign of democracy, but reckons that the relationship would deteriorate, making it harder to sell South Africa as a country which supports a free media.

Tuwani Gumani, the Media Workers Association of SA general secretary, said ownership and access to media remained a problem which the government has failed to tackle which is the primary reason it was not trying to "muzzle the media".

Thandiwe January-McLean, the CEO of SA Tourism, said she was convinced a solution would be found to ensure all parties were happy about the proposed media tribunal, however, there was a need for responsible journalism, and more crucially, the need to retain emphasis on the post-World Cup euphoria by ensuring that Brand South Africa remained high on the agenda.

"The bigger picture is still about getting people to come to South Africa," she said.

BBC World News and Africa Business Report is broadcast on DStv, Channel 400.