

## Sunshine journalism won't help Brand Africa - Trevor Ncube

Many people believe that sunshine journalism, which consists of only telling positive stories about Africa will make Brand Africa go forward and give it a nice feel, but I disagree, said Trevor Ncube, Mail & Guardian Media Group deputy executive chairman, speaking at the Brand Africa 2010 Forum on Thursday, 16 September 2010, in Johannesburg.

 Bylssa Sikiti da Silva 16 Sep 2010

Many governments across Africa continue to slam African media, accusing them of being unpatriotic by focusing on negative reporting, thus feeding the international media with key angles to portray the continent in a bad light.

### "The good, bad and the ugly"

But Ncube said: "We also have to tell the good, the bad and the ugly about Africa and the triumph against adversity, and put the mirror in front of Africa and say this is [what] Africa looks like.

"Why should we hide stories about HIV/AIDS, mismanagement and corruption?" Ncube asked, adding that by doing so, Africans will learn from their mistakes and improve the brand's reputation and image.

Furthermore, he said the deficit of skills in African newsrooms and the precarious position of media ownership in Africa limit the ability of African media to tell the story of brand Africa in an authoritative manner and with fierce leadership.

### Wildlife, starving poor covered

London-based Anver Versi, editor of *African Business* and *African Bank*, said there are only two stories being told in the west, Africa's wildlife, which is well covered, and the poor starving Africa.

"As a result, all Africa's successful business stories go unnoticed and are hardly mentioned, which is bad for brand Africa," he said.

"People are always worried in the west. When something happens in the DRC or Somalia, they quickly say Africa is unstable and war-torn because it is difficult to make a difference between Tunisia and South Africa on one side and the other war-torn countries."

Gary Alfonso, MD of CNBC Africa, said his station has produced 500 000 minutes of Africa content, more than any other station in Africa that usually produces only 15 minutes of Africa content and still call it an African report.

"In short, Kenyans must get their views from Kenyans, Nigerians from Nigerians, not from some analysts from New York," he said.

### Local representation

"What matters the most is that local representation must be included in the markets to have a

comprehensive view of the situation on the ground."

Mondli Makhanya, SANEF chairman, said African media need to tell African stories with a great quality but a free environment. "A free media is good for your brand and its future and development."

Anita Soni, chairman of the International Marketing Council (IMC) said Africans' destiny is linked to each other as the continent is not seen as a bunch of 53 countries but as a uniform mainland.

"It is time that the continent took responsibility for its own destiny and abolish the old Africa in order to promote brand Africa," she said.

### **A reasonable quest - Khoza**

Irvin Khoza, of the 2010 Local Organising Committee, said rebranding Africa is a reasonable quest and a mission that must be pursued with vigour to ensure that the continent returns from collapse, hunger and tyranny.

Brand Africa Forum, an initiative of Thebe Ikalafeng, is being organised by the Brand Leadership Academy in conjunction with the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper, CNBC Africa, South African Airways, *African Business* magazine, Idholland, and African Media Initiative (AMI).

One delegate, Pierre van der Hoven, CEO of Baobab International, said Africans need to start generating their own positive stories, and not expect western journalists to come here to do positive work about Africa.

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### **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. His 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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