



THE PRESIDENCY: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
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## **REMARKS**

**BY**

**HON. KENNY MOROLONG, MP  
DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY**

ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
LAUNCH OF THE MDDA AND COMPETITION  
COMMISSION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND  
REPORT

06 MAY 2025

SANDTON, SOUTH AFRICA

**Chairperson of the MDDA Board, Prof. Hlengani Mathebula,  
and MDDA Board Members**

**CEO of the MDDA, Ms. Shoeshoe Qhu and MDDA Team**

**Chairperson of the Competition Commission, Ms. Doris  
Tshepe**

**Beneficiaries of the Economic Development Fund**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

**Good Morning!**

As you are aware, the Economic Development Fund (EDF) was established in 2017 as a result of an agreement concluded with the Competition Commission, following its extensive investigations into anti-competitive behaviour within the media and advertising sectors.

These investigations uncovered historical exclusionary practices and imbalances that limited the participation of independent, small commercial and community-based media entities in the mainstream market.

Established from funds allocated by the Competition Commission, this initiative was therefore aimed at creating a more inclusive and diverse media sector in South Africa and supported young black entrepreneurs, media, and small agencies previously marginalised by high barriers to entry.

## **Programme Director,**

Anti-competitiveness in the media sector poses a serious threat to the principles of a free and diverse media environment as it leads to homogenised content as editorial lines become influenced by corporate interests or advertiser priorities.

The lack of competition discourages innovation and independent journalism, shrinking the marketplace of ideas that is vital for a healthy democracy.

Of even more consequence, the suppression of smaller, independent media undermines journalistic independence. These outlets often serve as critical voices against dominant narratives, and are more likely to cover underreported issues and amplify the voices of marginalised communities. Without them, grassroots reporting suffers, resulting in a press that is less responsive to the public and more beholden to economic power.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen**

On the 3rd of May, South Africa joined the international community in observing World Press Freedom Day, a day that honours the vital role of journalists and reaffirms our collective commitment to media freedom.

On this day, we issued a statement on behalf Government and in part said: “As we commemorate World Press Freedom Day, it is crucial that journalists continue to do their work with integrity and courage”.

We similarly called on all our to support freedom of the press. In this regard, our press statement asserts that “a robust and independent press is essential to a healthy democracy.”

**Programme Director,**

Press freedom, in South Africa, is protected by the Constitution and upheld as a cornerstone of democracy. World Press Freedom Day, reminds us of the crucial contribution journalists make in promoting transparency, accountability, and informed public discourse. It is a moment to celebrate the integrity and courage with which many of our journalists continue to serve the public interest, often under challenging circumstances.

As we reflect on this occasion, it is important to acknowledge anti-competitive behaviour as a growing threat to media freedom in our country.

This form of economic exclusion restricts the public’s access to a broad range of perspectives and compromises the media’s ability to hold power to account.

In calling on all citizens to defend media freedom, we must also commit to ensuring a fair and competitive media landscape that allows all voices to be heard.

World Press Freedom Day, is not just about censorship but a reminder that government, regulators, civil society, and industry must work together to protect the integrity of our media ecosystem. In this regard,

our press statement to which I have referred, concluded as follows “government encourages journalists to continue doing their work without fear, favour or prejudice; sparing neither courage nor effort in bringing news reports to all”

In doing so, we reaffirm that a free, diverse, and independent press is not just a democratic ideal, but a democratic imperative.

### **Programme Director,**

In my engagements with the MDDA, I’m happy to see the recourse and investment in the sector as a result of the Economic Development Fund. This a great example of how economic regulation in our country continues to safeguard the interests of various key sectors including our media.

Not only has the EDF provided essential resources and educational opportunities, it has also fostered a media landscape that better represents and serves South African communities.

From the report we are launching today, we can see the MDDA’s and EDF’s key achievements, including the positive impact it has had on over 37 SMME’s (60% of which are youth-owned) and its contribution to gender mainstreaming.

It details the strategic investments in education through bursaries, which we view as a long-term investment and solution. This has the biggest potential impact for fostering leadership, change, and innovation in the industry.

Additionally, the report highlights initiatives such as the post-qualification experience, startup funding, sustainability funding, mentorship, training initiatives, and the provision of free advertising airtime - all aimed at supporting the growth and development of underrepresented groups in the industry.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let us remember that press freedom is not merely the absence of censorship, it is the active presence of diversity, independence, and fair competition in the media space.

As South Africans, we must ensure that our democratic values are reflected not only in our laws but also in our media landscape. Let us support our journalists, protect independent voices, and work together to build a media environment where truth thrives, plurality is protected, and no voice is silenced by economic dominance.

Let us stand united in our resolve: to defend not just the freedom of the press, but the conditions that make that freedom meaningful and enduring.

**Ke a leboga!**