

***Southern Times* relaunched in city**

Southern Africa's premier paper, *The Southern Times*, a joint venture between Zimbabwe Newspapers (1980) Limited and *New Era* of Namibia, was officially relaunched on Thursday, 3 November 2011, in Harare, Zimbabwe.



Media, Information and Publicity Minister Webster Shamu and Namibia's Minister of Information and Communication Technology Joel Kaapanda attended the relaunch.

The Southern Times editor Mabasa Sasa said, "For generations, we have been told that we are lazy, corrupt, greedy and only concerned with the pursuit of pleasure that we are only fit to be hewers of wood and drawers of water," he said.

"We have been told this so much that many of our people now believe it. But at *The Southern Times*, we know we are much more than this."

Sasa said Africans had achieved a lot in their history as evidenced by the construction of the Great Zimbabwe, among other successes and *The Southern Times* would thrive to promote the achievements.

"We are not ashamed of who we are and we take great pride in who we are becoming daily as we grow from strength-to-strength," he said. "Our story is of Africa, an Africa that is free and proud that is the story of *The Southern Times*."

Sasa said *The Southern Times* will promote the dignity and pride that had been robbed of Africans.

An African perspective

The Southern Times director, Dina Tina Gowases-Pakote said the newspaper will carry stories from an African perspective to counter propaganda from Western media that have reported negatively about Africa and its people.

"Southern Africa is headed for regional integration. We will be the mouthpiece of the people of Southern Africa," she said. "We believe we now have a product written by Africa from an African perspective. For too long the Western media have been writing negatively about Africa and its people."

"The time has come for us to take ownership of reporting on issues that matter to Africa, especially now that we are fighting the war of information dissemination."

The paper, which is distributed in Zimbabwe, Namibia, Zambia, and Botswana and through subscription in South Africa, will soon be found in all SADC countries.

Speaking at the relaunch, Minister Shamu hailed the close relations between Zimbabwe and Namibia.

"Let it not be forgotten that the roots to this fraternal friendship trace back to the days of our liberation struggles where SWAPO of Namibia and Zanu-PF of Zimbabwe forged deep relations founded only on mutual goals of decolonisation, freedom and national independence," he said.

"To this day, these core values form the bedrock to relations between us, now, in future and always."

Dangers and risks in the communication sector

Minister Shamu said the communications sector had numerous dangers and risks as shown by events in North Africa.

"There is the mortal danger of cyber-invasion, occupation and conquest," he said.

"There is the danger of cyber-crime. There is a danger of media instability, as indeed we saw with the global networks during the North Africa crisis.

"Curiously, when it was Britain's turn by way of the riots that engulfed her, the media was reigned in firmly. We need to be careful."

Minister Shamu said media products imported from the West posed a danger to African culture and customs. Minister Kaapanda said the relaunch of the paper was meant to reinvigorate reportage on African issues from an African perspective.

The African story

"The relaunch of *The Southern Times* was made with the understanding to give impetus and energy to reporting and carrying of the African story with vigour," he said.

"African journalists should not shy away from glorifying African culture, African successes, African ability to compete with the rest of the world. We should not be second to anyone."

Zimpapers board chairman, Dr Paul Chimedza commended Zimbabwe and Namibia for their support in the joint venture.

He said Zimpapers had with immediate effect injected R500 000 into *The Southern Times* to recapitalise its operations.

Meanwhile, Minister Joel Kaapanda last week toured Zimbabwe Newspapers' Harare Branch at Herald House where he was shown around *The Herald* and *Sunday Mail* newsrooms, the production and printing departments. He also visited the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation's Pockets Hill studios in Harare. Minister Kaapanda, who was accompanied by Minister Shamu, also visited Trans Media Corporation and the Zimbabwe Film and Television School for Southern Africa.

Source: allAfrica.com