

THE declaration of the Save the Press Campaign was adopted at the launch of the campaign at the University of Cape Town on May 22 1988.

Since the successful launch, the campaign's co-ordinating committee has moved fast to establish a broader grouping, in line with its aim of taking the campaign into the community.

About 200 media representatives attended the launch at UCT's new Education Building, where the campaign's declaration and resolutions were adopted. They are reflected below:—

Communication in all its forms has played a crucial role in shaping the world as we know it, contributing to enlightenment and progress, facilitating the exchange of ideas, and the breaking down of barriers between cultures and people. In the modern world communication has become institutionalised in the public media.

In democratic societies the media play a central role, providing access to information, presenting a wide range of opinions and contributing to the process of accountable government. The freedom of the press is thus intrinsic to the democratic process.

The role of the media in such societies inevitably generates a measure of tension between the

## IDASA Supports Save the Press Campaign Declaration

government and the press. Indeed, public vigilance and commitment to democratic ideals are crucial to prevent governments from encroaching on the free flow of information.

In South Africa today the government is clamping down on the media in an attempt to promote its own policies and deny the public access to information and opinion about alternatives. It has done this by using the law, by assuming blanket powers under the State of Emergency, and through restrictions on individuals and organizations. It is now resorting to closing down newspapers. This trend can only intensify as the government resorts to increased force to impose its policy against the wishes of the majority of South Africans.

In silencing the media, the government is cutting what lines of communication remain in a polarised society. South Africans will become more isolated from each other, conflict will intensify and the chances of a democratic outcome will diminish.

We, people and organizations associated with the media in its various forms, cannot remain silent while this process continues. We have joined hands in rejecting the government's attempts to define and restrict the role of the media in South Africa. We demand the right to fulfil the role of a free press in serving our society.

To this end we demand the right to:

- \* procure and disseminate information in accordance with the principles of our discipline, without state intervention, harassment or detention.
- \* free access and movement in pursuing these objectives.
- \* air ideas, views and opinions of people and organizations regardless of their political and ideological persuasion.
- \* act and campaign on behalf of any cause we consider to be humane and in the interest of the people we serve.
- \* associate with any movement or organization in pursuing these objectives.



# SAVE THE PRESS



Prof. H. Giliomee opening the Save the Press Conference. With him are Mr. Essa Moosa, Prof. Jakes Gerwel, Mr. Harold Pakendorff and Mr. Mansoor Jaffer.