

### ***Experts Disagree: Merits of Lifestyle Audits Challenged***

**Extracted from - The Mercury, 24 March 2010, Sipho Khumalo, Political Staff**

The controversial idea of lifestyle audits being conducted on politicians triggered a lively debate in Durban yesterday with some welcoming it while others said it created an impression that black politicians were corrupt.

These views emerged from the Democracy Development Programme Public Forum on Lifestyle Audits. The debate, attended by various leaders of political parties and members of the public, came in the midst of several audits "audits" carried by newspapers, including The Mercury, on several politicians and elected representatives both provincially and nationally.

Addressing the forum, political analyst Dumisani Hlophe said the way these audits were conducted created a perception that black cabinet ministers were corrupt or only blacks were involved in corruption.

"Sometimes those conducting these audits, look at certain people and conclude that they are corrupt and go out to prove that. I think this media driven lifestyle audit is problematic. That's why President Jacob Zuma and Deputy President Kgalema Montlanthe have objected to it."

However he also accepted that the country was dealing with the people who were entrusted with the public purse and they should be subjected to audits to ensure that they did not live beyond their means.

"Indeed, there is corruption in government and in the private sector, but the way we carry out audits should not suggest that corruption started with the black government in 1994," said Hlophe.

University of Kwa-Zulu Natal political analyst, Zakhele Ndlovu, spoke of the need to make the government agencies, such as SARS, responsible for conducting the audits, work effectively.

"There is corruption in public and private sectors but as South Africans we need to say we want a better future by ensuring that agencies charged with combating corruption work and are effective," he said.

Ndlovu said South Africa needed to make sure that those who broke the law faced the consequences. ACDP leader Wayne Thring suggested that people who sought public office opened themselves to public scrutiny, and they should accept that they would be expected to live differently