



**ATTENTION** : The Chairman  
Working Group One  
CODESA

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Dear Sir,

The National Television & Video Association of Southern Africa is an industry organisation which represents more than 1 100 members. These include independent broadcast television programme producers and facility houses, as well as individuals employed in the private sector of the South African broadcasting industry.

The NTVA intends to submit a joint industry presentation to Working Group One of CODESA, together with several associated bodies, namely the Film & Allied Workers Organisation (FAWO), the South African Film & Television Institute (SAFTI) and the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB). This document is still in preparation.

Attached please find a distillation of the points which are of greatest concern to NTVA members, which we would respectfully ask that you consider in your deliberations concerning the future of the electronic media in South Africa.

Yours sincerely,

DR. J DE VOS MALAN  
NTVA COMMITTEE



**RESOLUTIONS REGARDING THE FUTURE OF BROADCASTING IN SOUTH AFRICA**

as drawn from the NTVA response to the report of the Task Group on Broadcasting in South & Southern Africa and as submitted to the "Free, Fair & Open" Conference of the Campaign for Open Media/CDS.

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The members of the National Television & Video Association of Southern Africa believe that:

1. The broadcasting industry in South Africa should be deregulated, in order to allow access to the airwaves for all voices and a broadcasting industry free from political control.
2. Free market principles should be set and upheld in order to allow for lively competition in all areas of broadcasting, which will stimulate the local independent sector.
3. South Africa should maximise the educational function of broadcasting through combining the existing public broadcasting resources with those of the independent sector.
4. A truly independent and impartial Independent Broadcasting Authority (or Independent Communications Authority) should be created, to provide for the sound engineering management of the frequency spectrum for the benefit of all and to serve as a forum for public and industry representation.
5. The regulation of all forms of broadcasting should be kept to an absolute minimum.
6. The existing radio and television channels, equipment and technical personnel of the SABC should be regarded as a national resource and should be applied in the fields of formal, non-formal and informal educational broadcasting only.
7. The IBA (or ICA) should allow for the creation of independent public broadcasting services, based on private or community ownership and operated on a non-profit basis.
8. The IBA (or ICA) should set local content requirements for all South African broadcasters.
9. All broadcasters should be obliged to contract no less than 30% of their local content commitment (as set by the IBA) to local independent production and facility houses.
10. The development of an open broadcasting industry for all South Africans should include the pro-active creation of training opportunities, to ensure that as many voices as possible are heard on the airwaves.

In support of the concepts expressed in points 6 and 7 above, we further attach an extract from our response to the Task Group on Broadcasting in South & Southern Africa (pp.9 - 12), which deals with the nature of public broadcasting and the need for South Africa (in our opinion) to seriously consider adopting the United States of America's model in this case.

As you may be aware, the independent television production sector in South Africa stands in imminent danger of financial collapse as a direct result of the facts that:

- current broadcasting legislation restricts television broadcasting licences to only two players, the SABC and M-NET;
- both of these organisations have effectively denied independent television producers any meaningful access to the airwaves.

The result is that a number of our members have already been forced to close their doors and the remainder expect to be forced out of business during 1992. As the NTVA, we therefore stand ready and willing to assist CODESA in any way possible, including the submission of further written material as well as oral presentations, should you find this useful.

We take this opportunity to wish you every success in your extremely important deliberations.

Yours sincerely,



DR. JACQUES DE VOS MALAN  
NTVA COMMITTEE

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## CHAPTER FIVE : the role of the national broadcaster

Public service broadcasting at its best grows out of the needs of a particular community to disseminate for itself matters of human interest and communal importance which are not provided for in the natural course of supply-and-demand commercial activities.

The community therefore agrees, through its elected representatives, to publicly fund a broadcaster or broadcasters to fulfill this need. There is no absolute criterion which determines the size or definition of such a community and no reason why the community should be equivalent to the nation as a whole.

In a culturally homogenous community of limited demographic and geographic extent, the need for a variety of public broadcasters is likely to be comparatively limited, while the inverse also applies. The reasons for this are to be found in the fact that a community requires that its shared values be reflected by the public broadcaster which it funds.

South African society today represents an accidental geographic coincidence of widely divergent value systems. This fact is recognised in the TGROB [10.1]. The diminishing extent of the socio-economic domination of one value system over the rest, which we see today, serves only to reveal these differences more clearly.

The impossibility of a single public broadcaster catering for the needs of all these divergent value systems is obvious in the case of the SABC. After more than 50 years of operation and despite - for most of that time - sole access to the airwaves, the allocation of vast sums of public money (licences) and millions of Rands of private money (ad-spend), the creation of 23 different radio stations and 2 national television channels, the SABC has not managed to fulfill the "culturally and socially cohesive role" [Evans/TGROB 5.3] expected of a public broadcaster in Europe, for example.

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The democratic process - the fashionable social model of our time - demands the evolution of certain basic norms, such as a bill of rights, on which future cohabitation and co-operation can be based. While the drafting of these norms may be fairly rapidly achieved, their evolution as daily practice will take longer. The development of a new and comprehensive value system based on this practice will take even longer still.

At this point in time then, a national public broadcaster in South Africa will only be able to fulfill those needs which are already clearly seen and agreed by all to reflect shared values. All other public service broadcasting will - for the time being at least - have to reflect the values of smaller groupings of people within South African society, whether these be determined on linguistic, geographical, cultural, ideological or other grounds.

Of all the functions of public service broadcasting, which range from news and public affairs to the arts, the only area in which some commonality of values is evident is education. Since this also happens to be - by general agreement - the highest social priority in South Africa today, it is in this field that a national public broadcaster will be most immediately useful and acceptable to all those who will fund it.

Assuming that the creation of independent commercial television stations providing largely entertainment programming will indeed come about in a free broadcasting market, it is our contention that the framework for the proposed public utility company for the purposes of co-ordinating national educational broadcasting [TGROB 8.5.1.1] already exists, in the form of the SABC; that that corporation's existing radio and television channels, equipment and technical personnel should be largely retained as a national resource; and that these should be applied in the fields of formal, non-formal and informal educational broadcasting.

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Through the use of one of its current television channels only and a limited number of its current national radio stations, the SABC (renamed the PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL NETWORK) will be able to fulfill a most important public service as follows:

- formal education : broadcasting suitable programme material directly into formal teaching environments, by arrangement with the educational authorities, during daylight hours; this programme material can be produced by specialist educators, making use of the PUB-ED production staff and facilities;  
[see also p.22 - 24 of this document]

- non-formal education : broadcasting self-help and enrichment programme material to specific target sectors of the public during fringe times such as early morning and late afternoon; this programme material can be produced by the PUB-ED channel itself and contracted out to independent local producers;

- informal education : broadcasting factual news, public affairs and documentary programmes to the public during peak viewing times; this programme material can be produced by the PUB-ED channel itself and contracted out to independent local producers.

We propose that the second television channel currently operated by the SABC should become one of several INDEPENDENT PBS CHANNELS, on a privately-owned, non-profit basis, modelled on Channel 4 in Britain and specifically catering for the broadcasting needs of minority audiences, while further stimulating local independent productions.

All other public service broadcasting (radio and television, national, regional and local) should be deregulated to allow for private or community ownership on a non-profit basis, following the PBS model found in the United States.