

A FILM AND BROADCAST FORUM CONSENSUS STATEMENT ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

The Film and Broadcasting Forum (FBF) wishes to contribute to the discussions that are being held to determine the future of broadcasting in South Africa. While it is accepted that a new Broadcasting dispensation will take time to be researched and established, a broad dissatisfaction exists amongst all the members of the FBF with the way the SABC fulfils its responsibilities as a Public Service Broadcaster. The FBF, therefore, calls for the immediate formation of an independent regulatory authority that must be charged with the urgent regulation of broadcasting activities, and the coordination of the subsequent restructuring of the industry.

The regulatory authority must oversee and enforce, inter alia :

- * the public accountability of the SABC as well as all other broadcasters
- * an increase in the production and broadcast of minority cultural and language programming
- * increased local programme content in all programme categories
- * the elimination of political control of the SABC as the Public Service Broadcaster
- * the creation of a new dispensation whereby community and private enterprise have access to the Nation's broadcasting frequencies

In addition, the following matters give cause for concern :

- * Lowest-common-denominator standards are increasingly being adopted by the SABC at the expense of its Public Service responsibility (such as cutting back on African languages)
- * Commercial competition against the private sector from a privileged and publicly subsidised financial base is unacceptable
- * SABC news broadcasts continue to be politically biased
- * SABC's management of public funds

The FBF recommends :

- * A moratorium must be placed on the expansion and restructuring of the SABC
- * In order to truly represent the broad interests of the South African public, the SABC Board must be reconstituted

The following organisations, who represent a major part of the industry, are signatories to this statement: SA SCRIPTWRITERS ASSOCIATION (SASWA), PERFORMING ARTS WORKERS EQUITY (PAWE), SA FILM & TELEVISION INSTITUTE (SAFTI), FILM AND ALLIED WORKERS ORGANISATION (FAWO), PERSONAL MANAGERS ASSOCIATION (PMA), FILM MAKERS ASSOCIATION (FMA), NATIONAL TELEVISION & VIDEO ASSOCIATION (NTVA) AND SA ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL RECORDING STUDIOS (SA-APRS).

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