



**SOS: Support Public Broadcasting Coalition**

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## **SOS astonished by claim that varsity-qualified employees are “a drain to the SABC.”**

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The SOS Coalition is astonished by the latest statement made by SABC Acting Chief Operating Officer Hlaudi Motsoeneng. At a press briefing yesterday, Mr. Motsoeneng said “your degrees can’t work for you. You need experience to do the work. When these people come with their degrees, they drain the same people [who are skilled but don’t have degrees]”.

Mr. Motsoeneng’s statements are deeply concerning, particularly in the light of the shocking findings revealed in the Pricewaterhouse Coopers independent skills audit of our public broadcaster.

Amongst other things, the report revealed that:

- 15% of SABC staff demonstrated only marginal competence in strategic thinking;
- 2252 (62%) of employee personnel files had no proof of a senior certificate on file;
- 24 employees [1%] had fraudulent or non-compliant senior certificates and Grade 10 certificates;

These findings only demonstrate a dire state of affairs at the level of the leadership of the SABC.

The report further revealed that SABC staff “do not trust the management team or the SABC board and question their credibility,” suggesting a culture of nervousness and fear inside of the public broadcaster which adversely affects the standard of journalism and quality of programming.

The SABC is the single largest mass-communication medium in South Africa and, necessarily requires a diverse range of suitably qualified *and* skilled staff and specialists in order to not only fulfil its mandate, but to also be the leader in the broadcasting industry.

It is unconscionable that Mr. Motsoeneng has such a low regard for university qualified staffers and would-be broadcasters inside of the SABC and would seek to encourage a culture of mediocrity in our public broadcaster. The Coalition believes the sum-effect of these sentiments and practice can only erode the credibility of the SABC and impede the public broadcaster’s ability to fulfil its mandate and make a lasting positive contribution to the development of South Africa. This concern is even more pronounced now as we steadily approach elections and require a public broadcaster that works.

The lack of suitably qualified and skilled institutional capacity at the SABC clearly demonstrates that there is a crisis at the SABC. It demonstrates the need to fight for the sustainability of the SABC to ensure that that it actually serves broad, diverse public and not narrow interest groups.

It is important that the colossal skills shortage at the SABC be addressed as we move towards a digital future or the public broadcasters' digital plans will take a serious knock affecting the vast majority of people in South African who are dependent on it as a source of information.

We call on the public to reject advances made on destroying our public broadcaster. We call on the Board to censure Mr. Motsoeneng for his statements and make it clear that the SABC must and will prioritise the appointment of suitably qualified staff at all levels of the SABC.

We deserve more from our public broadcaster. We deserve an SABC that works!

The SOS Coalition represents a broad spectrum of civil society stakeholders committed to the broadcasting of quality, diverse, citizen-orientated public-interest programming aligned to the goals of the SA Constitution. The Coalition includes a number of trade union federations including COSATU and FEDUSA, a number of independent unions including BEMAWU and MWASA; independent film and TV production sector organisations including the South African Screen Federation (SASFED); a host of NGOs and CBOs including the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI) and Media Monitoring Africa (MMA), Section27 and a number of academics and freedom of expression activists.

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