

**SOS: Support Public Broadcasting Coalition**

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**The ANC Communication Policy Discussion Document is a positive beginning to a robust debate around policy changes in South Africa**

The African National Congress (ANC) today begins its National Policy Conference. SOS agrees with the President's statement at the beginning of the conference that noted that "this is the beginning of broader discussions on issues affecting the country". The SOS Coalition is pleased to be able to give feedback as a civil society voice to the ANC on the Communications Policy Discussion Document which will doubtless be central to the development of new ICT policy going forward.

The SOS Coalition wishes to congratulate the ANC on a detailed, comprehensive and progressive Discussion Document. The Coalition is of the view that the Discussion Document contains an honest and critical assessment of where we are and the challenges that we face. The Coalition is also of the view that many of the ANC's suggestions for how to meet these challenges are forward-looking and progressive and hopes that a number of these will find their way into the National ICT Policy Review Process. The Coalition would also like to encourage other voices to comment on this particular Discussion Document to make this a fruitful and participatory debate.

The SOS Coalition is focused on broadcasting, hence it did not comment on every aspect of the Discussion Document but only on those where we felt we could add value to the national debate. There are instances where the Coalition agrees with the Discussion Document especially on areas that highlight the challenges faced by the SABC and ICASA. However there are also areas where the Coalition does not necessarily agree with the Discussion Document and hope for further debates: areas such as local content quotas and Community Media issues. According to the Discussion Document, South Africa has one of the lowest local content quotas. This, in the Coalition's view is not necessarily true. We believe the problem lies more with compliance than with the quotas themselves. We are also a bit concerned with the lack of engagement with community media issues; the Discussion Document seemed to have sidelined community media struggles, especially those concerning competition and sustainability.

Please read the [full response](#) to the ANC Discussion Document.

Statement Issued by

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