

The Crisis at the SABC

The Freedom of Expression Institute remains concerned with the governance problems at the SABC and we are encouraged by the response from stakeholders attending the Public Meeting on Wednesday 06 July 2011.

The Freedom of Expression Institute believes access to credible, reliable and appropriate information is the central basis for free expression and association. To this end the public broadcaster plays a critical role in delivering those sets of information in different programmatic forms. It is thus in our interest to ensure a healthy, strong and sustainable public broadcaster in the SABC.

A healthy SABC is one where the all tenants of the organization works in harmony, complement's each other and deliver quality programming to all South Africans. The continued instability at a board and senior management level results in poor decision making, planning and thus executing the public mandate of the SABC.

The central thrust of our concern is thus that our people's right to information (as disseminated by the public broadcaster) is infringed upon and we fear that a number of other rights might be in jeopardy, including the right to free expression.

The FXI therefore:

1. Call on the Minister, the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee and the SABC board to urgently engage stakeholders on the nature of the crisis and show commitment to resolve immediate issues and process others. In particular:
 - a. Announce a process to fill senior positions at the SABC, including CGEO, CFO and COO.
 - b. Announce a process to engage the unions on other labour related matters.
2. Call on the Minister to announce the timelines for the policy review process with the view to allow roles players and stakeholders to prepare adequately and have meaning engagement.
3. Call on continued interaction amongst role players and support the demands of the SOS campaign in the interest of ensuring a stable and effective public broadcaster.

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