

**OUTLINING THE IMPORTANCE  
OF SABC'S EDITORIAL POLICIES**

Speech by  
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**CHAIRPERSON,**  
**SABC BOARD**



**DATE: Friday, 03 July 2020**

**TIME: 10h00**

**SUBJECT: SABC Presents the Final Draft of the Editorial Policies**

**Honourable MPS**

**SABC Board Directors**

**SABC Group Executives**

**SABC Staff Members**

**Members of the public, government and civil society organisations**

**Members of the Media**

Good Morning,

Today marks an important milestone in the history of the SABC as we finally launch the 2020 SABC Editorial Policies.

It is the culmination of a long, comprehensive public review and consultation process that has taken a few years longer than envisaged. Despite the challenges encountered, the SABC has always remained determined to finalise and publish significantly improved editorial policies - policies that are not only better aligned to the current broadcasting and digital media environment but also give policy certainty to our employees, management, Board, the public and all our stakeholders.

The Broadcasting Act requires that the SABC develop policies that are intended to ensure compliance with the ICASA Code of

Conduct, licence conditions, and the provisions of the Act. As the Board of Directors, we are also required by section 6(6) of the Broadcasting Act to ensure that there is adequate public participation in the development of these policies. As ICASA was to make unequivocally clear, the public's participation in this process is not only good practice but a mandatory statutory requirement.

Therefore in 2016, after then SABC management published revised Editorial Policies, ICASA declared these to be invalid due to a lack of sufficient consultation with the public on the final set of policies. This meant that the 2004 policies were still in effect and the SABC was required to restart the process. In 2017 the new Board resuscitated the Editorial Policy review in line with ICASA's ruling. In July that year, the first round of public consultations was held in all the nine provinces. The second round of public consultations was conducted from July 2018 after the SABC published draft editorial policies and re-engaged with the public, incorporating further feedback and input into the final document. Taking the 2016 ICASA ruling very seriously, the SABC decided to err on the side of more public participation, rather than less, which - by necessity - lengthened the process.

I want to just briefly explain the significance of these policies to the SABC. The Editorial Policies are one of the policy cornerstones of

the SABC's public mandate. These policies play a vital role in providing a framework within which sound decisions on SABC content and programming can be made in order to meet our public service mandate.

These policies are not just about Core News Editorial Issues and a new Editorial Code, but also include detailed policies on programming and publishing, dealing with a wide range of issues including stereotyping and discrimination, race, gender, disability, violence, audience advisories, privacy, dignity and reputation, children and guidelines for official SABC social media accounts. Also included is a revised Language Policy for SABC programming as well as policies on Universal Service and Access, Local Content, Religious Content, Educational Content and a Complaints Management Processes.

While public interest may focus on News and Current Affairs, it is vital to acknowledge the breadth and depth of the policies, covering all editorial issues across all programming genres and bringing SABC's Editorial Policies up to date with new developments in broadcasting and digital media distribution in 2020.

By adopting these Editorial Policies, we have set ourselves the highest of editorial standards, incorporating the values and

principles of our Constitution, the requirements of the law and the expectations of our audiences. There is now an opportunity for the SABC to lead the way and set an example, not just for public media worldwide, but for all media. Yes, we will make mistakes and at times we may flounder, but we will at least have these best practice, Editorial Policies to guide us on the difficult and complex issues in programming today.

On behalf of the Board of the SABC, I would like to extend our gratitude to our valued stakeholders - the general public - who made submissions and attended the hearings across the country and the traditional leaders, academics, civil society activists, parliamentarians and interested groups who not only devoted their time but more importantly, exercised their right to contribute to a process that is critical to the future of the public broadcaster.

I would also like to thank Dr. Joe Tlholoe for the invaluable contribution he made through the Commission of Inquiry into Editorial Interference in the SABC Newsroom. His findings went a long way into shaping the editorial management processes including the need for sound human relations in the management of the Newsroom. Dr Tlholoe's report was duly taken into account by the SABC board in reviewing, finalising and adopting the Editorial Policies.

Appreciation also goes to the members of the SABC Board committee on News and Editorial affairs for their leadership and guidance of the process, under committee chair Mary Pappaya, with members Michael Markovitz, DK Mohuba and Dr Marica Socikwa – all of whom are here today.

Lastly, on behalf of the Board, I would like to extend my gratitude to the management and staff of the SABC for their contribution to the editorial review process. It has been a long journey but your perseverance has led to the successful delivery of an important statutory obligation.

Your dedication to serving the public mandate will continue to steer the SABC in the right direction.

Thank you.