



MEDIA STATEMENT

SABC RESPONDS TO CWU STATEMENT

Johannesburg - Wednesday, 19 August 2020-The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) has noted the media statement issued by the Communications Workers Union (CWU). This statement contains several factual inaccuracies and the SABC is compelled to set the record straight.

Like many organisations globally, the SABC has suffered material loss as a consequence of the negative effects of COVID-19 on the economy. The SABC, along with other Departments and entities, was requested to submit an application for additional funding from the National Treasury in accordance with Section 30 (2) b of the PFMA and Treasury regulations paragraph 6.6. These regulations provide for the allocation of additional funds through an adjustments budget to finance unforeseen and unavoidable expenditure within a financial year. The Corporation therefore submitted a projected revenue loss of R1,5 billion to the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT) due to COVID-19.

The SABC, as the primary carrier of public content and messaging in line with its public mandate, has a responsibility to ensure that millions of South Africans are provided with important and credible information regarding COVID-19 in all official languages and across its television, radio and digital platforms. This inherent and unique responsibility compelled the public broadcaster to expand its normal operations which had a major impact on its budget. In the interest of the country and in fulfilment of its mandate, the SABC has had to embark on a number of activities for business continuity, which included displacing revenue-generating programming across its three free-to-air channels to accommodate all public announcements and media briefings relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as amplifying news and current affairs content. The SABC has not received any COVID-19 relief funding to date.

It is factually incorrect for CWU to claim that there has been no transparency and accountability on the utilisation of the bailout. The bailout funding was granted for clearly defined priorities. These priority areas are:

1. Settling outstanding accounts from our service and content providers;
2. Investment in new compelling content; and
3. Investment in, and the maintenance of, the SABC's technology and infrastructure

This has been strictly adhered to. No bailout funding has been utilised for anything other than that for which permission was granted. The bailout utilisation reports submitted to DCDT and National Treasury detail the movement of the received funding. There are also monthly meetings between the SABC, DCDT and National Treasury to monitor the utilisation of the bailout funds.

It is also incorrect to assert that the SABC was "sent packing at the CCMA". The SABC is continuing with the CCMA facilitated process in which all stakeholders, including CWU, are engaging on.

The SABC is committed to the financial sustainability of the Corporation to ensure the public broadcaster continues to fulfil its important constitutional mandate.

END

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