

SOS: Support Public Broadcasting Coalition
22 Art Centre, Suite 1, Cnr 4th Ave & 6th Street, Parkhurst,
2193, Johannesburg
Phone +27 74 690 1023; +27 76 084 8077
Email carol@supportpublicbroadcasting.co.za
sekoetlane@supportpublicbroadcasting.co.za
Website www.supportpublicbroadcasting.co.za



Providing Full and Comprehensive Information about DTT Developments to South Africans is Central to Strengthening Public Broadcasting

Yesterday, the Minister of Communications, Dina Pule, was set to give South Africans feedback and updates on the Departmental progress and status of several outstanding and important issues.

Among the issues to be discussed included progress reports on the impending DTT migration process, Frequency Spectrum, SOE involvement and the ICT Policy Review which is central to establishing an enabling framework for the broadcasting landscape.

While she was unexpectedly indisposed to communicate what developments the Department of Communications has made in broadening and strengthening the broadcasting landscape, particularly as it relates to public broadcasting, the SOS Coalition welcomes the gesture she and her department have made in keeping South Africans abreast of the issues in this regard.

The SOS Coalition further welcomes the ANC's call, during the ANC policy conference, that access to broadband and a public broadcasting landscape which is broadly reflective of all South Africans be opened up to all South Africans. We further reiterate our support for the ICT Policy Review Panel the Minister is constituting with the full hope and trust that the review process will be a transparent and accountable one which is broadly representative of all sectors of society and fosters and engenders meaningful public participation throughout the entire process.

As this process unfolds, however, the Coalition calls upon the Minister to commit the following to South Africans:

- 1) Making accessible and readily available to South Africans the set-top box specs which, almost five weeks after they were launched, cannot be accessed by the public;

- 2) A firm date which will commence digital switch-on and the dual illumination period, as well as for how long that will continue and what implications it will have for access to broadly representative, local and credible programming across all public broadcasting platforms; and
- 3) A firm date for when the set-top boxes will be available to all sectors of the South African public, for how much as well as a comprehensive plan for how they will be rolled out, particularly among low-income and indigent households.

The SOS Coalition represents a number of trade unions including COSATU, COSATU affiliates CWU and CWUSA, FEDUSA, BEMAWU and MWASA; independent film and TV production sector organisations including the South African Screen Federation (SASFED); and a host of NGOs and CBOs including the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI), Media Monitoring Africa (MMA), and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA-SA); as well as a number of academics and freedom of expression activists.

Carol Mohlala
Coordinator
(074) 690-1023

Sekoetlane Jacob Phamodi
Campaign Organiser
(076) 084-8077

Statement Issued By:

Carol Mohlala
Coordinator
SOS: Support Public Broadcasting
(074) 690-1023