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# **Position Paper**

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# **Media Transformation Summit 2015**

# **POSITION PAPER**





## Introduction

After 21 years of democratic transition, South Africa is belatedly edging towards a fully digitised communications era. Without decisive and speedy intervention, this era threatens to be characterised by the same massive and fundamental inequality of access and participation of communications in the last 21 years – and, indeed, of the communications sector during much of the apartheid era.

Concentration of ownership and control of the means of intellectual production is, in fact, higher today than it was in dying days of apartheid. Existing policies and the manner of our digitisation is ensuring that this trend will accelerate.

In place of the choice of perspective envisioned in the 1991 ANC Media Charter giving all South Africans access to the range of ideas, information and interpretation necessary to enable them to make informed choices about their participation in society, the media today offers us but one choice of perspective – even if it does so in hundreds of different formats.

Reversing this trend, and liberating our media from the sole objective of profit maximisation, will take time and a concerted and sustained effort by all progressive forces in our society.

To launch this process, the South African Communist Party (SACP) has co-focused its Red October Campaign in 2015-2016 on transforming the media, under the slogan Free the Media! It has also gathered its own media activists and a range of individual media figures and representatives of independent media formations to convene a conference to discuss the detailed objectives and mechanisms of a process of transforming the media.

Our intention is that the conference and the Red October campaign will produce a concrete programme that will ultimately achieve the conditions necessary for a diverse, dynamic and vibrant media, collectively reflecting the full range of perspectives and views held by South Africans – and giving South Africans, for the first time, access to real intellectual and content choices. The idea is magnificently summarised by the words of China's Mao Zedong: "Let a hundred flowers blossom, let a hundred schools of thought contend".

This document reflects the SACP's views on the current state of the media and on the way forward, as its contribution to the Media Transformation Conference.

It is significant that many of our positions are not new. They draw on the rich history of analysis and proposals our liberation movement, our democratic government and our country have produced in the last quarter-century on how best to create an enabling environment for a vibrant, dynamic media able fully to serve the people of our country. In developing our positions, the SACP has found and made use of several generations of documents largely forgotten or ignored by South Africa's media and by its decision-makers – from the Media Charter, written in 1991, incorporated into the ANC's first elections manifesto, Ready to Govern (and ignored thereafter); to the report, released in March this year, of the Ministerial ICT Policy Review Panel under Cde Joe Mjwara – and in particular its useful and thoughtful findings and recommendations on broadcasting and regulation, which seem to have fallen through the cracks created by last year's division of the Department of Communications into two.

We must learn from this history: it is not because of a lack of ideas on how to do it better that our media is in its current critical condition. It is because we, as a country and as a ruling alliance, have failed to turn those ideas into practical instruments of change. We have, instead, left it to the commercial market to decide what should be done and how – despite the overwhelming evidence that the market alone is simply not up to the task. To leave it to its own devices today, as we have done in the past, is to invite yet another market failure. More than 24 years ago, the Media Charter recognised this:

"The ANC asserts that mere declarations of media freedoms on their own are not enough. These freedoms must be underpinned by an equitable distribution of media resources, development programmes and a

deliberate effort to engender a culture of open debate. This requires policies of affirmative action to redress the inequalities in our society.”

Finally, we must thank those who have contributed materially and with their time and effort to make this conference possible.





## Overview

The quality of content in South Africa's media continues in sharp decline. There are many reasons for this – tighter and tighter concentration of ownership; deskilling and sustained staff-cutting to achieve short-term profit maximisation; an obsessive resistance to providing content targeting the mass market (South Africa's poor and working class majority). Most can reasonably be described as ill-conceived management decisions that damage any prospects of sustainable operation, thus perpetuating the media's content crisis – and its struggle to maintain the audience figures they need to sustain operations and satisfy the voracious appetites of their shareholders.

The approach adopted in the most substantial democratic-era intervention in the media – opening the broadcast frequencies to private operators – has ensured that, with few, exceptions, radio has done little more than replicate the hegemonic perspectives of traditional print platforms. Likewise with the explosion of web-based media – non-hegemonic voices remain on the periphery.

The consequence has been a unipolar media perspective and an increasingly inadequately informed South African public, forced to rely on rumour, gossip and social media, in response to increasingly unreliable information, analysis and interpretation from the formal media, both digital and traditional. The extent of this unreliability was graphically demonstrated in April this year when News24, publishers of nearly half the daily newspapers sold in South Africa and of the biggest “news” website, argued in the South Gauteng High Court that it could – and did – legitimately copy stories from rival media, without even a cursory check on the accuracy of the content. Our biggest publisher thus acknowledged that it routinely publishes material without knowing if it is true, partly true or complete fabrication.

At the same time, the steady reduction in the editorial resources behind print, radio and television stories, and those of their digital, web-based equivalents, has crudified media coverage of politics and economics in South Africa into a daily good guy-bad guy soap opera.

The unipolar perspective the media offers today is a far cry from the pre-1994 position adopted by our Alliance in the Media Charter:

“The ANC believes that ... democracy in South Africa entails a movement from a closed society into one based on a free flow of information and a culture of open debate. At the core of democracy lies the recognition of the right of all citizens to take part in society's decision-making process. This requires that individuals are armed with the necessary information and have access to the contesting options they require to make informed choices. An ignorant society cannot be democratic.”

With this as a foundation, the SACP has identified two key focal points for the Media Transformation Conference, the Red October Campaign, and the broader initiative to transform our media:

Diversifying the range of our media voices, through decisive action to break down the massive monopolies dominating information generation and distribution on all media platforms, and what the Media Charter refers to as “affirmative action” to achieve “equitable distribution of media resources, development programmes and a deliberate effort to engender a culture of open debate”. This will add new media voices to the sector, able to report on the world from other perspectives than that currently offered by South Africa's largely homogeneous media; and

Raising the standard of accuracy, reliability and credibility of the content offered by South Africa's media through a combination incentives and sanctions to motivate allocation of greater resources to the production and distribution of more reliable, accurate and credible information.

What is essential, however, is not the development of good ideas – South Africa has those in abundance, languishing in forgotten files in dusty offices. What is essential is that, as South Africans, we follow through,

ensuring that we achieve a diverse, dynamic and sustainable media, able to “arm” South Africans with the “necessary information ... and the contesting options” they need to make informed choices.





## Towards a diverse media

The proposition that South Africa has overly-concentrated media ownership, and that this has negative economic and political consequences, is not simply an opinion of opponents of the current media arrangement in our country. The only transnational study of the extent and impact of media concentration, undertaken through the USA's Columbia Business School's Institute for Tele-Information, provides an empirical answer. South Africa is one of the most concentrated media markets in the world according to the study into media concentration in 30 countries, including South Africa. The study is led by Professor of Finance and Economics, Eli Noam. His book on the subject has yet to be published, but in a presentation to the American Antitrust Institute in June 2012 he noted that the study covers a range of different media industries including content media (newspapers, magazines, books and audio-visual media), platform media (telecommunications and cable and satellite multi-channel platforms) and Internet media (ISPs, search engines and online news media). Media concentration, he noted, is high in all the countries studied, and from very preliminary findings is associated with "less democracy and freedom, less effective regulation . . . (and) lower digital access". The study uses the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) to measure the size of firms in relation to the industry to indicate the level of competition. This concept is widely used in competition law. Increases in the index indicate a decrease in competition and an increase in market power. According to Investopedia, the US Department of Justice considers a market with a score of less than 1 000 to be a competitive market. The closer the score is to 10 000 (the highest level on the index), the less competitive it is.

The presentation given by Noam at the 2012 conference indicates that all countries studied had all media HHI scores of over 1 000. In 2008/2009 South Africa had the highest level of concentration when considering all media (ie content, platforms and internet), with the highest global score of more than 6 000. It is followed by Egypt as the next highest concentrated media market (in 2004/2005 Egypt had a higher index than South Africa but the positions were reversed by 2008/2009).

Judged purely by content production sectors, South Africa ranks third highest concentrated media market (following China and Egypt).

Noam also noted that the study checked these figures by assessing not only the HHI scores of countries, but by counting "the voices". A company with more than 1% of its media market is defined as "a voice" – and even if the company cross owns media outlets in several media industries it is still counted as one voice. Even though it fairs slightly better in terms of this analysis, South Africa is still one of the top ten countries with the lowest number of voices (with the sixth lowest number of voices).

Noam's conclusions are difficult to fault: South Africa's levels of media concentration clearly have a negative effect on "democracy and freedom ... effective regulation (and) ... digital access".

As the Media Charter recognised in 1991, South Africa needs a greater variety of media voices, rather than attempting to compel the existing "voices" to reflect the diversity of South African opinion.

Of arguably more immediate concern is the presence of Naspers as super-monopoly in South Africa's media sector, with its roots reaching back more than a century, into the heart of the organisation that gave birth to apartheid, the Afrikaner Broederbond.

More than two decades after the 1994 democratic breakthrough, Naspers continues to control nearly half the daily newspapers sold to South Africans; two thirds of the weekly newspapers and magazines read by South Africans; the country's biggest internet service provider and information websites; more than 99% of pay-television programming watched by South Africans; and (if legal documents currently before the Competition Tribunal are accurate) has effectively assumed control of our country's public broadcaster, the SABC.

And it has achieved this not by the excellence of its content, but as a consequence of the massive advantage given to it under apartheid, and of post-1994 policy and regulatory decisions.





More broadly, all the daily newspapers read in South Africa, well over 90% of the weekly papers and more than three quarters of the magazines and websites are owned and controlled by four media houses, two of which have significant overlaps into control of the radio stations available to South Africans.

This is unhealthy. But, for a society still trying to reconstruct itself as an equitable participatory democracy, the implications of a circumstance in which the content of the print media (digital and hard copy), audio services (traditional broadcast and web-based) and video services (ditto) is generated in environments geared towards, and rewarding, profit-maximisation rather than quality and excellence, are of serious concern.

Two distinct initiatives are necessary to address this circumstance (significantly more extreme today than in 1994), both used fairly commonly throughout the world to address media sector and economic distortions: de-monopolisation and diversification.

### **De-monopolisation**

South Africa has two groupings of statutes and common-law precedent to prevent the development of economic monopolies generally, and to ensure diversity among licensed (mainly broadcasting) operators – a sufficient arsenal, at least in theory, to keep monopolies at bay. The first is overseen by the Competition Commission and the Competition Tribunal; the second by the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa).

While there is compelling circumstantial evidence of some level “corporate capture” in both forums, the impact of Noam’s “less effective regulation” in monopoly media ownership conditions is most striking in Icasa. In 2005, Icasa adopted a policy on satellite television broadcasting in terms of which statutory cross-media ownership restrictions did not apply to satellite-TV broadcasters. Cross-media ownership restrictions exist precisely to prevent excessive influence in two traditional media sectors (print and radio, print and TV, TV and radio) of an individual “voice”. The logic is both political and economic, and until recently was rigorously enforced with respect to non-satellite-based operations. The result has been the explosive growth of MultiChoice, Naspers’ pay-TV subsidiary.

Icasa’s decision has allowed a media house launched by the Broederbond – and which was the only media house to refuse to appear before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission – to dominate both traditional print and television sectors of South Africa’s media. More recently it has expanded its dominance to encompass the South African internet market (while at the same time arguing in court it had no obligation to verify the accuracy of its platform’s content).

Perhaps by coincidence, the policy instrument was signed for Icasa by a man who left the Icasa council a month later and, two years later, joined the board of MultiChoice.

What we seek at the Media Transformation Conference are common commitments to:

Reverse the Icasa policy on cross-media ownership, if necessary by amendment to its governing statutes, to enforce the break-up of the Naspers colossus – in much the same way as the US government forced the break-up of the telephony conglomerate, Bell;

Prohibit simultaneous ownership of satellite and terrestrial television operations – either completely, or with a cap on audience share on one or both sectors;

Expand the cross-media restrictions to recognise the role and influence of web-based, digital media;  
A more rigorous public oversight on Icasa.

These are the minimum actions the SACP believes are necessary to address the current ownership concentrations of ownership in South Africa’s media.



With respect to all media, the SACP recognises the Media Charter provides direction: “Ownership of media resources, production facilities and distribution outlets shall be subject to anti-monopoly, anti-trust and merger legislation.”

We believe the Media Transformation Conference should appoint a task team to review existing “anti-monopoly, anti-trust and merger legislation” and to develop proposals for submission to the government for such amendments to legislation as are necessary to ensure diversity of perspectives envisaged by the Media Charter are achieved, with its report to be submitted before the end of 2015.

## **Diversification objectives and mechanisms**

The SACP’s approach to diversifying South Africa’s media recognises that diversity of ownership is not an end in itself, but a means to an end – the ultimate objective being to ensure, in the words of the Media Charter, that all South Africans are “armed with the necessary information and have access to the contesting options they require to make informed choices”, through provision of a diversity of perspectives – of a diversity of content. We do not consider the occasional appearance of communist writers in the opinion sections of staunchly pro-capitalist media “diversity”. Rather the concept of diversification refers to the availability of media informed by a world view that differs from the hegemonic perspective in the current media – that recognises that the choice of stories that interest readers differs according to the class of the target audience, as does the angle taken in reporting events and processes.

Nor is the race of the reader (or the editorial decision-maker) of primary importance. Post-1994 “diversification” initiatives have tended to assume that shareholding by black South Africans will somehow translate into a growth in black audiences.

Yet there are concrete examples of individuals and trade union investment vehicles securing significant shareholding in media houses and having their nominated directors paying attention exclusively to the bottom line and dividend flow. Content has not shifted perspective to align with the communities on whose behalf the individuals and trade unions notionally secured the shares. South African media content very rarely addresses the issues and concerns of most South Africans, the majority of whom live in urban and rural townships and villages.

A similar position holds with editorial appointments of black people – three of South Africa’s four major business titles have, or have had, black editors. Whatever the personal impact, the titles have continued to serve a commercial and economic elite, often against the interests of the majority of working class and poor black South Africans.

Here it may be useful to point out despite the staggering growth of Zulu-language newspaper readership (and their web-based digital content), the South African mainstream media retains a knee-jerk antagonism to publishing in languages other than English or Afrikaans (Independent Newspapers under its new owners is a partial exception). Readership of their newspapers is thus in depressingly consistent decline.

To be “armed with the necessary information and have access to the contesting options they require to make informed choices” means, for most South Africans, having access to media in their mother-tongue.

Diversity thus includes dramatically expanding the language base of our media.

The SACP’s approach also recognises that current forms of media ownership contribute to the concentration of ownership and thus to the lack of diversity.

While all existing print titles are owned and controlled through conventional corporate mechanisms, our broadcasting system entrenches commercial, profit-maximising forms of ownership by setting up three tiers of ownership:



Public (the SABC),

Commercial (all privately-held regional or national radio and television licences), and

Community (low frequency, small footprint, local stations, theoretically but seldom in practice controlled by the communities they serve).

In a country in which the vast majority of citizens do not possess the means to participate meaningfully in commercial ownership structures, and thus to exercise any influence on content, intended audience and so on, this has had the effect of turning privately held radio and television licenses into money-making ventures, rather than (as the Icasa Act requires) being regulated “in the public interest”.

The poor, working class and un- or underemployed majority in South Africa is left in the margins, with some (often unsustainable) “community” services.

The SACP therefore holds the view that a major revamp of the broadcasting system is urgently required, with a collective ownership tier added to include co-operative ownership (by staff, by audiences and so on) – and an enforceable affirmative action policy introduced to bind Icasa to achieve a reasonable level of parity between commercial and collective ownership of the operations it licences.

More broadly, in the traditional print and emerging digital sectors – for both content production and distribution – the SACP takes the view that support for new entrants able to offer new perspectives not currently available to South African audiences is necessary, in the form referred to in the Media Charter, and specifically the commitment to its statement that “affirmative action will be implemented to provide financial, technical and other resources to those sectors of society deprived of such means”.

The Comtask (Task Group on Government Communications) in the late 1990s began work on this, followed up by a comprehensive report by the Government Communications and Information System (GCIS), both now forgotten and gathering dust.

The administration in office at the time took that view that such support would require a partnership with existing media operators, introducing a voluntary system, and establishing the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA). In negotiations ahead of its establishment, media proprietors won the right to effectively veto any grants by the agency, and to have the commanding heights of the media (national and regional operations, and distributive operations) entirely excluded from its remit. While the agency battled gamely to support new and emerging media, it was restricted, in the words of a former executive manager, to “funding cottage industries”.

The SACP proposes that the Media Transformation Conference commits itself to working actively to have the MDDA transformed or entirely replaced by an independent agency (if necessary with the character of a Chapter 9 institution) with a clear and explicit mandate to achieve content diversity in all sectors of the South African media, including:

Diversity of language

Diversity of perspective and

Diversity of forms of ownership.

It further proposes that the conference establishes a working group to review the MDDA Act, related statutes and proposals made prior to its founding regarding the diversification of South Africa’s media, and that this working group should submit a report before the end of 2015.

The SACP offers to provide administrative support for the working group.



The primary and overriding objective of the SACP is that of building and strengthening media platforms that advance and reflect the perspectives and interests of the workers and the poor, the majority in our country.

## Accountability

As a party committed to the principles and values enshrined in the Media Charter and the Freedom Charter, the SACP notes the Media Charter's commitment to "basic rights and freedoms":

"The basic principle around which our Media Charter should revolve is maximum openness within the context of a democratic constitution and Bill of Rights. Thus, for instance, it would be erroneous to advocate the setting up of bodies which determine what society should and should not read, hear or watch. Rather, judicial procedures should be effected if and when civil rights are threatened or violated. Media freedoms should be understood in the context of other citizens' rights such as the right to privacy and dignity."

Recent amendments to the mandate of the Film and Publication Board (FPB) may transform it into a body "which determine(s) what society should and should not read, hear or watch". However, the SACP supports the view set out in ICT Policy Review Panel documentation that the advent of the digital era requires that we review and amend all existing content regulatory structures and systems, dividing all future regulation of content into three primary streams: print, audio and visual, covering both digital and traditional media.

We further support the idea that all such regulatory structures should be independent – that is, like the structures controlling the behaviour of medical personnel and other professionals, they should be established by statute, but operated independently of both the government and of the sectors they regulate.

We are particularly concerned that the existing print and broadcasting self-regulatory bodies are, as voluntary membership bodies, powerless to enforce their rulings, and that any sanction handed down is damaging only to the pride of proprietors. We take the view that to serve as an enforcement mechanism, these bodies require the force of statute behind them.

Further, the proposed media appeals tribunal has the potential to make complaints against media platforms overly complex and cumbersome. Ideally such processes should be simple, accessible, affordable and relatively quick.

The SACP therefore proposes that the Media Transformation Conference commits itself to:  
A rapid and comprehensive review and overhaul of all existing and proposed media content regulatory systems and structures to achieve:

A system covering all media content, including web-based and similar media content;

A system established by statute, but with statutorily guaranteed independence, as envisaged in the Media Charter;

A system to which adherence is either compulsory or which incorporates compelling incentives to join (and compelling disincentives for not doing so);

The introduction of a fast-track, low-cost but courts-based anti-defamation process, enabled by statute, similar to that in operation in the UK and elsewhere; and

That the conference identify mechanisms to achieve these commitments in South Africa.

South Africa's newsrooms – towards fact checking, not profit maximising

South Africa's newsrooms and its journalists and media workers have been under sustained siege for decades



– beginning in the 1980s when, across the world financialisation began to infect media ownership.

In the name of “cost efficiencies” proprietors have juniorised and de-skilled newsrooms while requiring fewer journalists, with fewer skills and less experience, to produce more stories for their core employer – the hard copy editions (of newspapers), audio or audio-visual platforms – while simultaneously preparing content for websites (written, audio and audio-visual) and contributing to social media.

They have, in consequence, virtually no time to ensure that what they produce is accurate, credible or reliable. And they are particularly vulnerable to input from spin-doctors and other would-be influence peddlers.

In his book *Flat Earth News*, British journalist Nick Davies quantifies the vulnerability of journalists under the digital-era, profit-maximisation workload, and the consequent influence of spin-doctors with little interest in truth or accuracy, but much on influencing audience opinions. In some cases more than half the words in individual English newspaper editions originate from third-party sources (including advertisers, commercial lobbyists and political spin-doctors), but appear as the work of “independent” journalists.

Davies’ conclusion on the partisan character of many British newspapers is: “There’s no conspiracy here, it’s just a mess.”

The situation is worsened by the absence of a national union in South Africa, primarily organising media workers responsible for production of editorial content.

With our ally, Cosatu, and trade unions operating in the sector, the SACP therefore intended to initiate a programme to bring together South African journalists and media workers to develop a common approach to working conditions, remuneration, rights and responsibilities, and to agree a process of ensuring its implementation across all media platforms. This includes employment equity, which is a serious issue that must be addressed. Like ownership, employment equity must be seen as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. It must translate into progressive and diverse content.

### **The role of the public broadcaster**

The SABC has a unique position in the South African media, both because it is state-owned, has the largest combined audience of any media house, and has a markedly different mandate.

Its audience stems from its two dozen radio stations, broadcasting in all official languages, and most “recognised” languages.

Its mandate is to provide, from a non-partisan perspective encompassing all South Africans, a comprehensive record on significant events and developments domestically, regionally and globally.

It is generously funded to fulfil this mandate – through the “licence fee” (effectively a retrogressive, ring-fenced tax) and the right to run at least as much advertising per hour as commercial broadcasters, which, because of the size of its audiences, generates vast revenues.

Yet its audience numbers have been in decline for much of this century, its finances and governance are in perpetual crisis.

Oversight by parliament is poor, as is the supposedly arms-length administrative oversight by the Minister of Communications.

Its two-year partnership with MultiChoice is currently the subject of litigation and it increasingly operates as an independent fiefdom, accountable only to itself.



Its budget allocation have moved, year-by-year since 2000, away from expenditure of content to support for an increasingly bloated bureaucratic stratum which does little other than perpetuate its own existence.

Remedying the problems and challenges of the SABC is a massive task.

While the SACP is sympathetic to the solution by the Greek government during last year's Eurozone crisis – it closed its public broadcaster for a fortnight – it believes the more prudent and realistic approach is to recognise:

That millions of South Africans continue to rely on the SABC as their primary source of information and entertainment;

The current and potential role of the SABC as a national unifier and common asset.

It therefore proposes a major review of the SABC's governance structures and protocols, and development of proposals that will, if implemented ensure:

Greater administrative accountability to parliament and to the executive;

A more explicit and binding mandate, with sanctions imposed on executive and non-executive directors in the event of non-performance; and

A delay on the provision of any state funding until the SABC has costed the fulfilment of its public service mandate as set out in law;

A major, state-initiated review of its staffing and performance against mandate, and the removal of all executives responsible for non-performance.

Delegates to the SACP's special national congress in July resolved to "reclaim and professionalise the SABC" and demanded the removal of "the illegally appointed so-called COO".

## Digital migration

The current broadcast digital migration policy, and particularly the use of a "dumb box" STB, has direct, negative implications on attainment of the SACP's media transformation objectives. It will broaden the digital divide between the affluent South Africa and the resource-poor majority – creating, in the words of one writer, "a form of TV apartheid".

The inability of the "dumb box" STB to adequately protect against signal piracy will prevent free-to-air broadcasters from acquiring high definition and other high-quality content – producers are increasingly reluctant to sell their content to broadcasters using insecure signal distribution networks.

The resulting declining audiences – and thus advertising revenues – will further starve free-to-air broadcasters of the resources they need to compete with MultiChoice's satellite service, DStv, and its digital terrestrial service MNet – the TV arms of Naspers' vast and influential media monopoly.

It is widely recognised that MultiChoice executives actively campaigned against an earlier policy that provided for "smart box" STB technology, which would have gone some way to levelling the playing field between free-to-air broadcasters and MultiChoice's satellite and terrestrial operations. Equally importantly it would have significantly lowered the financial barriers to entry for potential pay-TV competitors to MNet and DStv.

Detailed local newspaper reports suggest MultiChoice effectively bought the political support of SABC executives and directors to back their campaign against that policy, along with that of South Africa's tiny (and mis-named) "community television" sector, and of part of the leadership of the National Association of



Manufacturers of Electronic Components (Namec).

The campaign ultimately succeeded in having the policy reversed, leaving MultiChoice, now in a bizarre, parasitic partnership with the SABC, virtually unchallenged in South Africa's television sector.

The process has been indicative of some of the crudest forms of "corporate capture".

For the SACP, the consequent development of "TV apartheid" demands a sustained and broadly based initiative to ensure that television and its web-based audio-visual off-shoots are not denied to the majority of South Africans as one of the means of arming themselves with "the necessary information and ... access to the contesting options they require to make informed choices".

It has therefore included digital migration on the conference agenda.

The damaging economic consequences for the South African electronics manufacturing sector of the "dumb box" policy have been set out in detail by the manufacturers' chapter of the South African Communications Forum (SACF), Namec too, having recently rid itself of the two individuals who briefly took control to back MultiChoice, is strongly opposing the current policy.

The SACP has taken up the cudgels on behalf of the voiceless in this debate, South Africa's working class, poor and unemployed majority.

Namec will be addressing the conference in more detail on digital migration.

The SACP looks to delegates to the Media Transformation Conference to back a programme of action to pre-empt the formal and irreversible introduction of "TV apartheid" in our country.



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