



**A VIRTUAL ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS &  
DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES, MS PINKY KEKANA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATIONS & DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES (DCDT)  
BUDGET VOTE 9**

**18 MAY 2021**

Honourable Speaker,

Chairperson & Members of the Portfolio Committee on Communications,

The Honourable Minister of Communications, Ms Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams,

Acting Director-General of the Department of Communications & Digital Technologies,

Chairpersons, board members and CEOs of the various State-Owned Entities within our portfolio,

Senior Government Officials,

Esteemed Industry Captains and partners,

Members of the media, virtually present on this platform

Ladies and gentlemen!

**Ndi masihare! Thobela!,! Lochani! Good Afternoon, Goeie Middag!, Molweni, Sanibonani!**

Fellow South Africans, twenty-five years and ten days ago, the South African Constitution, considered by many as one of the most advanced in the world, with a Bill of Rights second to none, was adopted with a 421 to 12 vote in this very August house.

It was truly a day for South Africa and Africa to shine when Deputy President Thabo Mbeki made the iconic ‘I am an African speech’ setting us up for leadership of our continent, and it is on this celebratory note that we wish the people of Africa, both on the continent and in the Diaspora, a wonderful **Africa Day on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May**. We can only build *the Africa we want* if we work together.

In this theme of working together with Minister, Stella Ndabeni- Abrahams we have in the last 2 years been hard at work in repositioning the department, with our 2021/22 Plan deliberately focusing on *economic recovery* so that even in this unprecedented era of uncertainty and disruption, we can continue to create economic opportunities for our people and at the same time, protect them from technological vulnerabilities.

With the threat of the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of COVID-19's impact - as government we must make intelligent policy choices and implement them correctly.

That is what accountable leadership requires of us. We are grateful for the continued support and guidance we received in the last two years from this house and all our stakeholders, and we want to still say, *le ka moso le se lahle!* Ours is to continue serving public interest!

Honourable Speaker, in support of the Plan already tabled by the Minister, allow me to emphasize and add a few priority areas linked not only to our theme of economic recovery, but to the priorities of the ruling party as per the resolutions of the 54<sup>th</sup>

National Elective Conference in Nasrec in 2017 and the Manifesto of my party. Our priorities, honourable speaker and House are linked to:

- **Strengthening of policy and regulatory environment,**
- **Stabilisation of SOEs and turnaround,**
- **Information security and cybersecurity**
- **Protection of Children from online harm**
- **Skills development for youth and women empowerment**

Honourable Chair,

### **Strengthening of policy and regulatory environment to take South Africa into the Future.**

Following cabinet approval, we published a Draft White Paper on Audio- and Audio-Visual Content for public comments in October 2020 which sets out a new vision for the audio-visual sector and the wider cultural & creative industries. The public consultations on the policy are in process, and we hope to submit the final policy to Cabinet in this financial year for immediate implementation.

We have also gazetted the Data and Cloud policy for public consultation which complements existing measures in unlocking the socio-economic value of data in SA, also to be finalised for Cabinet approval this year.

Following the signing of the FPB Amendment Act into law in 2019 and the subsequent Guidelines, the FPB is currently developing a Content Classification Index (CCI) for Africa, seeking to create a set of Likert scale indices for African content regulators. The Harmonisation of Content Regulation in Africa event was hosted by South Africa, in March 2021. Countries represented included South Africa, the Chair of the Steering Committee, Nigeria, Kenya, Eswatini, Malawi, and Zambia. Ten critical success factors were identified going forward, of which I want to highlight a few of the most important:

- Promoting local content creation and audience development;
- Giving the youth a voice by including them in all future harmonisation engagements;
- Linking in-country Child Sexual Abuse Material reporting hotlines to international hotline networks

## **Stabilisation of SOEs and turnaround,**

The stability of SOEs is at the centre of our economic recovery. These entities are not only vehicles for job creation, they are also strategic levers for policy implementation, delivering services to our people.

It has been a year of trial and tribulation for the national broadcaster, and as such let us start with what occupied most of the media coverage and conversations about the SABC in this last financial year, in a quote by the Board Chairperson,

“The final number of employees who exited the Corporation on 31 March 2021 was 621, with a total severance cost of about R164 million, which will be recovered within 5 months.

The Total Guaranteed Remuneration Package of those 621 positions is about R457 million per year.

This means that our total salary bill target of R700 million reduction will be fully realised over a 3-year period (by 2023/24) as the annual salary increase freeze of at most 3 years is implemented, plus the 3 alternatives proposed by management.

This potential savings will however be reduced when the current 468 vacancies are filled. Management will ensure only critical vacancies are filled to mitigate any risk of an increase in the compensation bill.

I would like to add that the retrenchments were the most painful and emotionally challenging process, but necessary for the survival of the SABC.”

The retrenchment of public servants during one of the world's biggest crises will unfortunately be marked against the public broadcaster, but as they have said themselves, there are potential savings that will have to be shown in this coming financial year, and which will have to be reported on by them, in next year's budget vote speech.

Speaking of which, the total bail out funds have been dispensed to the organisation to fund its turnaround, and as at the end of March 2021, the entity had a cash balance of R1.4 billion on hand – a shift in the right direction, considering where the organisation was last year, this time.

The five-year partnership with Telkom on TelkomONE, will house the public broadcaster's free-to-air radio and TV channels - a first of its kind digital carriage agreement, livestreaming the most-popular TV and radio programmes.

They also launched a dedicated Educational Channel on multiple platforms, and interrupted scheduled free-to-air programming to bring #WozaAfrica to millions of Matrics.

The SABC were very excited to report to us of their 24hr Sport Channel on DTT and OpenViewDTH.

We look forward to more progressive interventions from the public broadcaster like these.

Fellow South Africans we call on you to do your part by **choosing** to pay your TV license fees. It costs only R265 a year – and it is the ***right*** thing to do.

Honourable members,

I am happy to announce that a new permanent CEO for **.ZADNA** has been appointed bringing the necessary stability at the entity which is in charge of our critical intangible assets – domain names.

The new **FPB Board** has been appointed and duly inducted. The Board will initiate a process to appoint the executives, and ensure that the entity is well capacitated to implement the Film & Publication Board Amendment Act signed into law by the President, in 2019.

## **Information security and cybersecurity**

Honourable Speaker,

Cybersecurity is a national imperative and demands a coordinated and holistic approach, especially so for Cybersecurity Awareness initiatives which need to reach all residents of a country, especially in a country like ours where cyberbullying, cyber gender-based violence, cyberstalking, and revenge pornography are a part of our daily lives. It does not discriminate on the basis of location, wealth, and status, but women and youth, and people with disabilities seem to be the majority of the victims.

In line with their mandate the Cybersecurity Hub implemented a national Cybersecurity Awareness Portal, creating a platform for citizens to report cyber incidents and assist victims of cybercrime, amongst others.

With the increase in violence both in the physical and online worlds, during the pandemic, the Cybersecurity Hub has created a community radio station campaign, broadcast on approximately 65 community radio stations, reaching an estimated 5 million people. This is a current campaign as we continue the work of awareness and discussion on cybersecurity in South Africa.

Going forward, we want to create targeted conversations about online gender violence, and the Cybersecurity Hub is in partnership conversations with the NPA, FPB and SAPS, to broaden the reach, and increase the scope.

## **Protection of Children from online harm**

Honourable Speaker,

Protecting the African Child is a pivotal part of the work of most nation states on the continent, and it's a proud day for South Africans that the FPB has taken the lead on this for the continent.

The Films and Publications Amendment Act, has put in place the necessary safeguards and entrusts FPB with enforcement powers to protect our children and ensure the safety of our citizens by:

- Regulating the dissemination of content by commercial online distributors
- Making revenge pornography illegal and punishable by law

Triumphantly, the FPB entered into an online distribution agreement with Netflix International, in 2020, for the prioritisation of safe content consumption for our citizens, where materials distributed in the country are accompanied by FPB ratings.

## **Skills development and youth and women empowerment**

Through its many programmes, the .ZDNA will capacitate young South Africans and Entrepreneurs to explore economic opportunities within the Domain Name Systems industry.

As of January 2021, ZADNA conducted four awareness campaigns on unlocking digital opportunities with .ZA, reaching 44,804 people thus far, and conducted training equipping 309 South Africans with the necessary skills on how to be a Registrar or Reseller, with a special focus on the country's most marginalised, being Women, Youth and People with disabilities.

In line with the Department's strategic objective of "Increased access to secure Digital Infrastructure" the .ZA Domain Name Authority intends to launch the Digitised Schools

project in the 2021/22 financial year. This project aims to give Schools and learners safe and secure digital identities and domain names, and will also empower SMMEs, in partnerships with ICT Corporates, and Government, starting with a pilot of 200 public schools, at an estimated cost of R4 million.

I am particularly looking forward to the project of 'Digitising the Informal and Township Economies', which will identify new economic opportunities to bolster existing channels within the domain name system value chain.

In the spirit of 'build, back better', in partnership with the Department of Women, Youth, & people with disabilities, we will create specific programmes in the technology industry to improve the gender transformation of the sector, as it is one of the poorest transformation sectors in the world today.

In **conclusion**, Honourable members, the then Chairman of the Constitutional Assembly, one Cyril Ramaphosa said in his speech, on the day the Constitution was adopted, "This constitution also creates a framework for sound and effective government in South Africa. It is good for investors, and it is also good for the rand. Co-operation, accountability, responsiveness and openness are entrenched as the principles of government at all levels in South Africa."

It is these simple fundamentals of the constitution that we need to uphold today, as we 'build, back, better'.

Enkosi! Ke a leboga! Baie Dankie!