

ICT sector performing poorly in transformation

The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector is not doing well in terms of transformation, Telecommunications and Postal Services Minister Siyabonga Cwele said on Tuesday.



Minister Siyabonga Cwele. Image via [Times Live](#)

Addressing delegates at the launch of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) ICT Sector Council at Gallagher Estates, in Midrand, the Minister said a report has shown that there is not enough transformation. The *Sector Monitoring Report* which outlines the status of the implementation of BBBEE in the ICT Sector, showed that efforts by ICT companies were not sufficient.

“The report reflects the transformation efforts of ICT companies that were gleaned from 200 BEE verification reports. This is a small sample but it provides a good measure of where the sector is in relation to transformation. The report shows that the ICT sector is performing poorly on transformation by all measures,” said the Minister.

On Tuesday, the Minister formally launched the BBBEE ICT Sector Council – that is tasked with broadening the meaningful participation of blacks, women, youth and people with disabilities in the ICT sector – that was appointed in September 2015.

The Council that came up with the report said the Minister is working on discussing constraints to transformation with all stakeholders. Minister Cwele thanked all companies that provided information, as well as the South African National Accreditation Services approved agencies that contributed to the report.

“I urge all the companies in the sector to provide information to the Council for future monitoring reports so that we can have a more accurate and broader picture of how the sector is contributing to transformation.”

While the ICT still has a long to go with regards to transformation, there is no shortage of young entrepreneurs who are pursuing their dreams by establishing ICT businesses that seek to solve local challenges. “They need a hand up not hand-outs. And these dynamic youth are present in all provinces.”

Among the functions of the Council which functions independently, is to measure the progress the country is making towards an inclusive digital economy. “The work of the Council is predicated on the principle of building progressive partnerships that deliver measurable outcomes towards a transformed society by radically altering the ICT landscape.”

While technology has evolved over the last 22 years, it has left scores of people in rural areas behind, mostly in developing countries. “We can’t afford to allow new digital divides to form because we won’t be able to achieve a more inclusive digital society. We need to embrace technology to bridge the digital divide.”

The Council is made up of representatives from government including the Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services, telecommunications, electronics, youth, organised labour and broadcasting sectors.

Since the establishment of the Council in September 2015, it has worked to a point where Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies approved the Amended BBBEE ICT Sector Code for gazetting for immediate implementation.

“The advantage of sector specific code is that it brings regulatory certainty and enables the sector to maximise its transformative impact by focusing on opening up participation in the sector for designated groups that include women, youth and people with disabilities.”

The Council’s members include Council Chairperson Nokuzola Ehrens, Gavin Pieterse, Lucky Masilela and Morwesi Ramonyai.

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