

Patta resignation sparks debate

Debora Patta's resignation as e.tv's group editor-in-chief has opened up a heated debate and dug a huge hole in many viewers' hearts, who are concerned about the future of the channel's 'no fear and no favour' editorial philosophy. Patta announced her resignation yesterday, Wednesday, 30 September 2009, adding that she will focus solely on her investigative programme *3rd Degree*.



Bylssa Sikiti da Silva 1 Oct 2009



Following the announcement of Patta's departure, e.tv CEO Marcel Golding said in a statement that Patrick Conroy, eNews current group news editor, will be taking over from Patta as general manager of eNews.

An e.tv source told Bizcommunity.com: "Of course it is a shock resignation. I don't mean to disrespect Patrick, but I believe that Patrick is Patrick and Debora is Debora."

"For me, Debora is irreplaceable and whoever steps in her shoes will just have to be Debora in order to do what she did. There is an ample reason to fear for the future of the editorial policy."

'No fear, no favour'

Another source said: "Debora got tired of sitting in the office and becoming kind of an office zombie. She was longing to do what she was trained for - field work. But it is a big challenge for Patrick. He must have a big heart and nerves of steel to keep the 'no fear no favour' policy going. It is the only thing that makes a difference between the SABC and e.tv."

William Bird, head of Media Monitoring Africa (MMA), told Bizcommunity.com: "You may not always agree with what she has done and her fearsome reputation, but she certainly deserves a huge amount of respect for guiding e.tv news where it is today."

'A difficult decision, but...'

Golding also said Patta will take on the role of chief anchor, and will continue producing and hosting *3rd Degree*, as well as training, mentoring and developing budding TV journalists and news anchors.

Bird, who is currently in the Hague, Netherlands, where he is attending the Forum on Press Freedom 2.0, added: "I don't think it will necessarily have a negative impact on their editorial policy, but I think it will be a real challenge having her still there but not as editor-in-chief."

Patta said: "This has been a very difficult decision, but I believe it is right for me to follow my passion for journalism. Given the pressures of producing an investigative programme and the demanding job as editor-in-chief, it would have become unsustainable to do both in the long run. In the end it came down to my passion for journalism and certainty that there are still many untold stories in South Africa."

ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.
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