

Obed Bapela introduces new MDDA board members and thanks former leaders of the agency

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MDDA board members farewell and welcome function speech by deputy minister in the presidency for performance monitoring and evaluation, Hon Obed Bapela, MP.

Programme director

Chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Communications, Eric Kholwane

MDDA board chairperson Ms Phelisa Nkomo and members of the board

CEO of MDDA Lumko Mtimde

Honoured guests and stakeholders

Ladies and gentlemen

I am pleased to be part of this occasion today as we offer our appreciations to the members of the board who have served this institution with distinction, full dedication and their unwavering commitment.

I convey personally on behalf of the minister, who is out of the country, our very best wishes for helping steer the institution to meet its constitutional mandate to transform the media industry.

This small but important gathering of outgoing and newly appointed board members we officially thank and bid farewell to the outgoing members of the MDDA board and to welcome the new members.

Why can't we get all the people together in the world that we really like and then just stay together? I guess that wouldn't work. Someone would leave. Someone always leaves. Then we would have to say good-bye. I hate good-byes. I know what I need. I need more hellos. ~Charles M. Schulz

It is a good opportunity for the new members to meet and interact with the outgoing members. In a way this is an opportunity for those who have been on this track before to hand over the baton of achievements and challenges in the MDDA to the new members.

I wish to thank you for taking the time out to be available here today. I know some of my colleagues have apologised as they had other commitments; I wish to say that your presence is highly appreciated.

The minister and I had interacted with you and enjoyed your support and leadership of the MDDA. You had an opportunity to oversee the MDDA's 10th anniversary of its establishment. Its vision into its second decade is "Access to Diversified Media for All" ten years last year and being key to persuade the media diversity broad agenda.

Allow me in my short time that has been allocated to me to emphasise the foundation that you have laid. A lot of work has been done, from receiving clean audits from the Auditor General in successive years is work well done. We should not therefore be distracted by our success and lose focus - the task ahead is even bigger.

The MDDA will continue to draw from your skills from time to time. You have not retired - I can see your continued desire to serve. Your heart will remain at MDDA and the willingness to continue working is most appreciated.

I have, on assuming office, movingly expressed the view that we would only be able to deliver on our mandate to empower our people and transform our society, for the better when government jointly tackles the tasks in partnership and collaboration.

We take this opportunity to congratulate community radio stations that reach out to almost 80% of our communities in their own indigenous languages, including the Xosana language which is now broadcast on the public radio (SABC).

We congratulate the more than 26% of the total radio listenership listening to community radio and similarly viewers of community television have increased.

In line with MDDA's initial vision, which said, "Each and every SA citizen should have access to a choice of a diverse media", in most district municipalities there is some form of media for consumers to choose from.

There is community and small commercial newspapers and or magazines in languages spoken at the localities, in addition to community radio.

The mandate of the MDDA is to encourage the ownership, control and access to media by historically disadvantaged communities as well as by the historically diminished indigenous language and cultural groups. Since 2003, when the MDDA was established the agency held its first grant awarding meeting in January 2004.

Government will continue to support and uplift the work of the MDDA in order to make a meaningful impact in creating an enabling environment for media development and diversity.

This will be done with an end game in mind that allows public discourse to flourish and where a diverse, vibrant and creative media flourishes and reflects the needs and aspirations of all South Africans.

We are considering developing a Green Discussion Paper on media development and diversity as part of the agency review, informed by all the body of research conducted and supported by the agency, industry research, 10 years of its experience and discuss other policy matters identified by the board.

This process will inform the proposals including possible amendments to the MDDA Act of 2002, as we celebrate 20 years we need to review the mandate.

Today, is a special day, where on behalf of the president, Jacob Zuma, as part of the 10 year anniversary of the MDDA, I would like to thank the board of the MDDA led by Ms Kanyi Mkonza who led the establishment stages of the first five years of the MDDA, by Ms Gugu Msibi who completed her five year tenure as a chairperson of the agency in January 2013, Ms Phelisa Nkomo, the current Chairperson of the board from 2013, the many board members who have served in the last 10 years and some are still serving, and most recently Ms Nadia Bulbulia and Ms Nothando Migogo whose terms expired in December 2013.

Your contribution to the agenda of democratising of our country through a diverse media and the creation of an enabling environment is recognised. Similarly, we thank and appreciate the hard work, commitment and passion of the MDDA management team led by Ms Libby Lloyd until 2006 and since then by Mr. Lumko Mtimde.

Distinguished guests,

I am privileged to welcome and introduce to you the new board member Mr Roland Aloysius Williams, a community activist who hails from Nelson Mandela Bay in the Eastern Cape, where he currently serves as the head of communications of the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality, we wish you good luck and hope that you will indeed serve to the best of your abilities.

Your diverse expertise and experience will strengthen and enhance the work of the MDDA, viewed collectively with the other board members.

Distinguished guests,

As I conclude, let me take this opportunity to thank all the funding partners of the MDDA, who committed to support government in the implementation of the Objects of the MDDA Act. We urge that they continue their support for the noble cause of media diversity and plurality of voices and opinions.

Together, we aim to increase our funding for the MDDA and fast track transformation of media in South Africa. We need to build strong partnerships with all community media and all government in general, in order to achieve the 100% access to information as espoused in the 2030 vision of the National Development Plan (NDP), where all communities even in the deep rural can also enjoy 100% access to information.

I want to express my very best wishes to the members whose term has come to an end and in the same spirit welcome the new board members to part of this organisation and ensure its success.

The year 2014 marks South Africa 20th anniversary of freedom and democracy, as a country we have grown to be a big teenager.

Once again, thank you for your continued support and raising the bar for MDDA and its transformation developmental agenda.

I do hope that our path would cross once more in the near future.

I thank you!

▪ **Deadline looms for MDDA-Sanlam Local Media Awards entries for 2014** 23 Jan 2015

▪ **MDDA-Sanlam Local Media Awards entries for 2014 now open** 26 Nov 2014

▪ **Entries open for MDDA-Sanlam Local Media Awards** 25 Nov 2014

▪ **Mandla Langa acknowledges 20 years of media freedom and diversity** 28 May 2014

▪ **MDDA-Sanlam Local Media Awards winners announced** 27 May 2014

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