

Padayachie aims to stabilise SABC, strengthen ICASA



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Newly appointed communications minister Roy Padayachie faces an uphill battle to transform a "dysfunctional" ministry he inherited from his predecessor Siphwe Nyanda into a service delivery winning team that knows where "its" people and organisations live and fully understands their needs - as President Jacob Zuma put it.



Yesterday, 11 November 2010, Padayachie outlined his vision, which includes "stabilising" the SABC and "strengthening" ICASA.

Stabilising leadership

"Our first priority would be to stabilise the leadership within the SABC and address its programme of work that will resolve its financial liquidity problems, and guarantee that the corporation will deliver programme content in tune with the needs of the people," the minister told journalists in Pretoria.

Padayachie, who served as a deputy minister of communications under the late minister Ivy Matsepe-Casaburi, said the country needed a public broadcaster that functions competently.

"Therefore," he said, "we will work closely with parliament, the board chairperson, board members, executive leadership, executive management and general staff with a view to finding solutions to the problems besieging the corporation.

"This would include, amongst others, the finalisation of the turnaround strategy and the creation of stability within the board and the corporation."

Deep-rooted, complex problems

However, it remains unclear if the minister will this time around succeed where others - including himself - have failed in the past. Many observers believe that the public broadcaster's problems are so deep-rooted and complex that it might take a lifetime to solve them all.

A source close to the SABC told Bizcommunity.com last night: "Different ministers have come and gone, but the SABC's problems are still right here and the situation is even getting worse.

"As long as this institution is used as a political battleground, where party loyalists are appointed to serve the interests of a small group of powerful people, our children's children will continue talking about the stability of the SABC. Let's just wait and see."

Finalising Public Service Broadcasting Bill

Furthermore, Padayachie said his ministry will accelerate the finalisation of the Public Service Broadcasting Bill, in the aim to repeal the Broadcasting Act of 1999, so as to align the broadcasting system to the country's developmental goals. We want to do things differently - working faster, harder and smarter, the minister said, declaring a war on selfishness, laziness and futilities.

SOS Supporting Public Broadcasting said it will hold a press conference today at 11am to respond.

Regarding the future of ICASA - described by critics as toothless, hopeless and lacking capacity - Padayachie said: "ICASA must be strengthened and, at all times, function with confidence and independence.

"Efforts to strengthen its capacity will include measures to enhance its technical and financial competency."

Apart from stabilising Sentech and working hard towards building an integrated national broadband plan, Padayachie's vision also includes appointing a director-general and fill other senior management vacant posts in the next three months to "stabilise" the department.

For more:

- The Daily Maverick: [Reporter's notebook: Communications department starts communicating](#)
- TechCentral: [Padayachie's priorities: full transcript of speech](#)

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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