

Nyanda meets with ICT firms

Communications Minister Sipiwe Nyanda has held an inaugural meeting with information and communication technology (ICT) companies under an initiative to hold quarterly meetings to strengthen his relationship with the private sector.

By [Lesley Stones, Information Technology Editor](#) 26 Oct 2009

The ICT Industry Forum aims to build partnerships between the Department of Communications and industry organisations including the National Association of Broadcasters, the South African Communications Forum and the Computer Society.

Members will give their opinions and advice to the minister on the department's policies and programmes, recommend new policies and strategies, and generally work towards creating sustainable conditions for the industry to support the government's socioeconomic goals.

Nyanda told the inaugural meeting last week that he recognised the need for co-operation between the government and the private sector to find solutions to the challenges facing the hi-tech industry.

The forum sounds similar to two bodies launched by former president Thabo Mbeki, one international and one local, where industry players were invited to advise the president and his ministers on how SA could use technology more effectively to boost its social and economic status.

The meetings proved frustrating for the private sector as their proposals were listened to, but rarely put into action.

Nyanda acknowledged that there had been similar initiatives in the past, which he said had collapsed due to a lack of long-term commitment from the department and the participants.

It was clear that for the new ICT Industry Forum to be sustainable it had to be nurtured, he said.

“My department and I commit to providing leadership at both political and administrative levels. We are aware that the benefits of these kinds of initiatives take time to be realised,” Nyanda said.

The meeting discussed issues such as the department's plans for next year's Soccer World Cup, progress on the migration of TV broadcasting signals from analogue to digital, the country's broadband policy and cyber security policies.

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