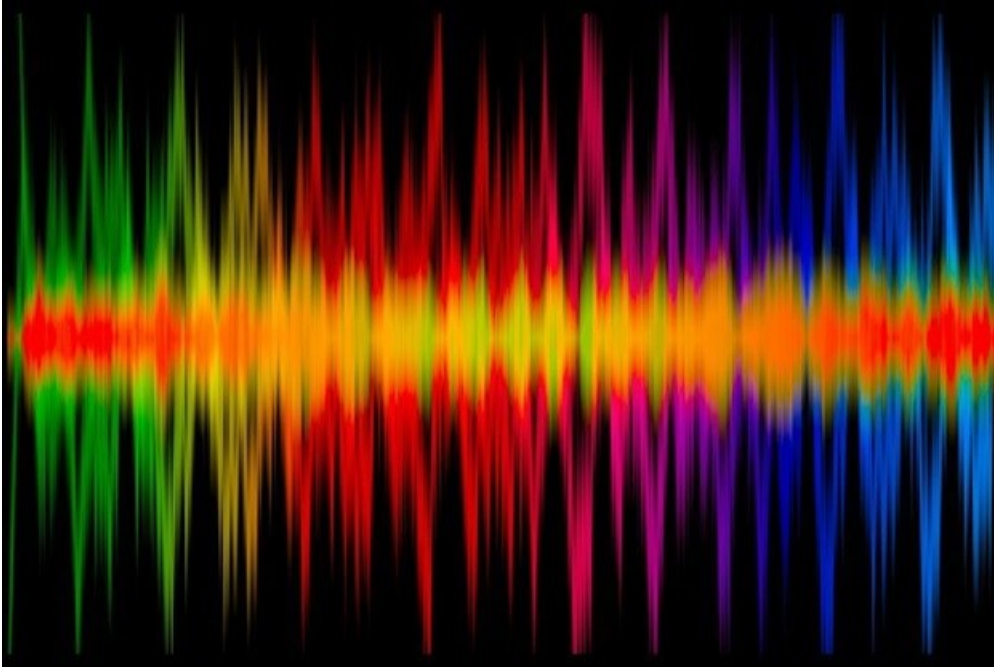


Electronic Communications Amendment Bill withdrawn

Communications Minister Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams has decided to withdraw the Electronic Communications Amendment Bill to enable further consultations and to align it with the drive towards the fourth industrial revolution.



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“Preliminary engagements have commenced with some of the stakeholders and this will continue in the near future, with emphasis on the need for active collaboration, underpinned by the non-negotiable quest to create an inclusive and people centred fourth industrial revolution and digital economy,” the Ministry of Communications said in a statement.

The Minister on Tuesday participated in a meeting with the Portfolio Committee on Telecommunications and Postal Services.

The committee deliberated on the Electronic Communications Amendment Bill, which was tabled before Parliament in October 2018, followed by public hearings involving various stakeholders, including regulated firms.

“With regards to the specific issues raised in the report of the committee on the bill, the Minister informed the committee that these would be considered as part of further consultations with the stakeholders,” the Ministry said.

The Minister also made the decision to withdraw the bill as Parliament was unlikely to finalise it during the remainder of the current term.

This was the first engagement between the Minister and the committee in her current responsibility as Minister.

In her contribution, the Minister indicated that the Ministry of Communications has been mandated to spearhead the Fourth Industrial Revolution, working with other stakeholders within and outside government.

“The fourth industrial revolution is in our midst, which calls for us to rethink our approach to everything we do, including the kind of institutions that will lead and enable the fourth industrial revolution.

“Expansion of the ministry’s mandate and the reconfigured department has implications for policy and legislation as we are now required to think anew, [while] building on the advances of the past 25 years of democratic regulation,” Ndabeni-Abrahams said.

The Minister told the committee that a holistic, forward looking approach is needed instead of ad hoc amendments to the existing legislation.

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