



MINISTRY  
COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **DEPUTY MINISTER PINKY KEKANA**

### **Keynote Address**

#### **“Harmonisation of Content Regulation in Africa Conference 2021”**

**23 March 2021 | 9am**

Good morning

- Ms. Nzinga Qunta, Programme Director
- Acting CEO of FPB & Chairperson of the Interim Steering Committee - Ms. Abongile Mashele
- INHOPE. Executive Director, Mr Denton Howard
- Ms. Josephine Mapoma, Director General of the independent Broadcasting Authority of Zambia
- Dr Ezekiel Mutua, CEO, Kenya Film Classification Board
- Mr Adedayo Thomas, CEO, National Film and Video Censors Board, Nigeria
- Mr Vusigama Khumalo, Broadcasting Services Manager Swaziland Communications Authority
- Mr Humphrey Mpondaminga, Director: Regulations, Malawi Censorship Board
- Executives from Google, Tik Tok, Showmax, Discover Digital and Interactive Entertainment SA
- Ladies and gentlemen

The Film and Publications Board conference in 2015, determined that the protection of children in the digital space is one of the greatest challenges facing the world, and this remains, still today. The responsibility to protect the rights of children in the digital space lies with everyone, most notably law enforcement agencies, policy makers and regulators, as much as it does with caregivers, parents and teachers.

As with other rights management, a formalised approach to content regulation for all new, existing, and future converged media platforms is a necessity for countries to balance freedom of expression, access to information, and protection of consumers, amongst other factors.

Given the real-time movement of content over the internet and social networks – there is no country that can operate in isolation when it comes to content regulation any longer.

The borderless digital space catalyses a common global issue requiring sustainable solutions that are definitively agile, in order to be responsive and proactive to the rapid advancement of technology.

Collaboration is key to the continent’s approach, through discussions, deliberations, and sharing of best practices. For Africa, this is a necessity given the diversity of cultures, content consumption patterns, access, and social norms and values, that exist amongst African countries - to collectively find common ground.

In context, it is critical to understand that countries have various legislative frameworks and obligations that govern the way content is regulated.

It is imperative that the outcome is achieved by focussing on the desired results and performance of a common regulatory model rather than concentrating on the shape and direction the regulation should take.

Considering the role of the FPB, organisations, stakeholders, and our regulatory counterparts in Africa, all organisations need to take a leading role in proposing a solution that is unique to the specific needs of the continent, our consumers and ultimately - the protection of the African child.

The term “Africanisation” of content supports the creation of content that tells the African story, rather than trying to adapt it to western understanding.

With the AfCFTA upon us, it is now an urgent necessity to create a market for African content using various collaborative forums and mechanisms, and ensuring that content is part of the Trade agenda of Africa, with a special focus on how content will be treated under the AfCFTA.

With this in mind, there are a few key strategic areas of focus, namely:

- Unpacking the shared values across African countries
- Benchmarking of current content regulation systems in order to succinctly filter out commonality and create a unified rating system.
- Creation of competitive incentives for children to participate in the proposed African Internet Week public education campaign.
- Interrogating existing frameworks within the AU and determine ways of bringing African content development onto the AU’s agenda.

- There must be a benchmarked solution based on the strategies of countries that are pioneers in various aspects of content creation and regulation (e.g.: Rwanda)

The FPB has a key role to play in ensuring that the legislation, regulations and frameworks used to put robust content regulation in place for the benefit of South African citizens, has to keep pace with the changes in technology and the concurrent effects of this on content broadcast and dissemination.

Given the socio-economic extremities across the length and breadth of Africa, discussions and agreements with relevant stakeholders and content regulation counterparts in the continent is required to kick start the harmonisation of content regulation, protecting African citizenry.

As we are all aware - Agenda 2063 is the African Union's master plan for Africa to be self-sustainable. It is the continent's blueprint for inclusive, sustainable development and a driver for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity pursued under Pan-Africanism, towards an African Renaissance.

Agenda 2063 has a list of Flagship Programmes and a 10-year implementation plan, to provide both qualitative and quantitative transformational outcomes for Africa.

Of these programmes, the harmonisation of content regulation fits perfectly into the following areas:

- African Commodities Strategy ( which facilitates production and marketing of local commodities).
- Establishing the African Continental Free trade Area, which came into effect on 1 January 2021.
- Pan-African e-Network (aimed at growing Africa's ICT and e-platforms).
- Cyber Security.

Growing Film Sectors in many African countries have the potential to make content production and distribution a major economic driver in Africa. Already Nollywood has created a market that rivals Bollywood and Hollywood.

The largely youth-centric population of Africa and a rapidly growing African diaspora, with scalability and real-time mobilisation of content across African and global borders, will boost the sustainable growth of this sector. A single content regulation system across Africa would support the trade in film and media content between nations, and contribute materially to intra-Africa trade, which is the resultant goal of the AfCFTA.

Data consumption in Africa is increasing rapidly, especially with the active competition between device manufacturers and digital service providers to deliver ever cheaper hardware and connectivity solutions, giving rise to unfettered access to information. For the first time in history, the poorest in society, even in developing and underdeveloped countries, have the

potential of access to information through global digital networks, once only available to the rich and elite of our society.

Social media's technical description is that of UGC or platforms that engage in "user-generated content". There is a revolution happening as we speak, a democratisation of access to information - no longer are citizens dependent on the media or governments as gatekeepers of information and news.

This user-generated content can be produced and distributed anywhere in the world, at the touch of a mere button, 24/7/365.

To date more than 5 billion videos have been shared on Youtube and 300 hours of videos are uploaded per minute. This is all content that needs to be regulated, and Africa needs to protect its content and content creators.

In closing I want to raise a critical factor of your success in ensuring the solution to the African culture of information equalling currency which still pervades, mostly due to constraints and challenges around infrastructure. As part of your harmonisation of content regulation, do not lose sight of the end goal being that the more we democratise information, the more participation we have in the economy, the closer we get to "The Africa we Want".

On behalf of our President, H.E Cyril Ramaphosa and the South African government, we take pleasure in welcoming you all to our dynamic country. We wish the Steercom, stakeholders, and participants all the best with your deliberations over the next few days – we know that an agreed roadmap to make this a tangible reality, will be your end result.

Asante Sana, Malibongwe, and Thank you!