

COMMUNICATIONS AND THE BATTLE OF IDEAS

Noting:

- 1.1 The ANC's 54th National Conference takes place in a contested political, social and economic environment characterised by, among other things:
 - 1.1.1 The contest of ideas in society takes place in various platforms and the media being one of them. At the centre of this contestation is the nature and character of the national democratic society we seek to build.
 - 1.1.2 While the ANC remains the dominant force in the public discourse informed by its character and role in society, we note that this is increasingly being contested by an array of forces. This explains why even political forces that purport to be opposed to each other have seen a reason to form opportunistic alliances to dislodge the ANC from power.
 - 1.1.3 In the last few years we have witnessed the emergence of an increasing number of civic and social activism that is campaigning around contested ideas on governance and decision making. Where some of the forces have failed to win democratic elections they have opted for the use of the judiciary to assert their own hegemony.
 - 1.1.4 The increasingly rapid uptake of social media by many of our citizens, especially the youth, and its increased primacy as a platform of choice for accessing and disseminating information. Social media use is fast surpassing traditional media consumption in some countries around the world.
 - 1.1.5 Increased inter-connectivity, whereby multiple sources of information are consumed on multiple devices. Given this, the ongoing Battle of Ideas has assumed global dimensions unprecedented since the advent of the modern media age.
 - 1.1.6 Media consolidation and hegemony in South Africa has meant that the larger media houses – many of whose editorial positions on government and the governing party are adversarial – predominate. Greater convergence has meant that these anti-ANC voices, some of which overtly favour the political opposition, dominate not just one but multiple platforms at any given time.
 - 1.1.7 ANC infighting, disunity and use of media to engage in battles is undermining trust and communicating an image of paralysis and projecting a movement that is at war with itself. Challenges and divisions within the ANC and the broader mass democratic movement have created an opportunity for exploitation by such opponents of the ANC.
 - 1.1.8 Despite progress made by the organization to spread the message of unity and discipline, the media continues to capitalize on divisions and factionalism prevalent in the organization.
 - 1.1.9 While the battle of ideas happens in many platforms, the media continues to be the main dominant force in shaping debates and setting an agenda in society.

2. On the Battle of Ideas

Noting:

- 2.1 That the battle of ideas is the struggle over ideas themselves and a struggle for the progressive production and dissemination of ideas – including the media, the educational and training system, the policy apparatus within the state, and a wide range of cultural and faith based institutions and practices. The ANC struggle is about attaining political hegemony in society and, in this regard, within a heavily contested terrain.



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- 2.2 Further noting that the ideological onslaught against the ANC using all forms of media including broad-casting, print, social media and the internet seeks to dislodge and undermine the character of the movement. The onslaught replaces the NDR narrative with the liberal democratic narrative and therefore undermine the hegemony of the ANC in the battle of Ideas. Leadership and hegemony is not given or static. We must fight for the values and principles of the ANC.
- 2.3 The ANC must operate in a coordinated and disciplined manner to set the agenda in the battle of ideas. The war of ideas must be fought like a real war, therefore there must be a strict coordination of content and messages between all structures of the organisation. The advent of the community and public media space offers a potential, progressive opportunity for the ANC, depending on the ability to influence this media and provide it with adequate support.
- 2.4 Recognizing the need to articulate the ANC policy positions in a manner that is consistent and coherent. The critical question becomes what is contained in the content. The credibility of any message lies in the credibility of the messenger.
- 2.5 There is overwhelming consensus within the ANC on the need to defend our ideas and ideals as a movement across all existing and emerging platforms – with the understanding that the Battle of Ideas should be located within the terrain of the struggle. This starts with reaching a common understanding within the ANC itself of what the Battle of Ideas entail. The hegemony of the ANC and the democratic forces in the battle of ideas remains central to the advancement of the national democratic revolution.
- 2.6 Further recognizing that social polarization is due to the lack of radical change in the socio-economic conditions of the majority of South Africans resulting in the economy remaining in the hands of the few.
- Therefore resolves:*
- 2.7 That there should be intensified training on political communication as part of political education of ANC structures and deployed cadres; this training should help to mobilise the greatest number of cadres to participate in public debates and to respond effectively to the growing onslaught against the ANC in all media platforms
- 2.8 That the ANC must occupy the space, in order to be in hegemony, with ideologically clear ideas and therefore lead society. ANC must go back to skilling and producing cadres who are politically and ideologically able to communicate ANC policies, principles and values.
- 2.9 That the ANC as a revolutionary movement must continue to mobilise and lead society around a common vision that presents a credible political, social and economic narrative that is in itself an alternative to that of the dominant capitalist class. That is the Battle of Ideas.
- 2.10 That the ANC interventions must be founded and informed by the Strategy and Tactics and Organisational Renewal. The Conference noted the need to have a common understanding of the battle of ideas, as the dialectical process, guided and under-pinned by the Freedom Charter and the National Democratic Revolution. We must offer a radical alternative to the existing social and economic order.
- 2.11 Recognizing the role, challenges and achievements of the Department of Information and Publicity (DIP) over the years. The role of the Department of Information and Publicity is to coordinate and facilitate the engagement particularly with the media, i.e. all forms of media platforms.
- 2.12 All ANC Subcommittees and its Leagues must engage at all levels in a programme that is crafted to interact and engage with all society formations, such as religious institutions, labour, civil society, academics, youth formations, women formations, and other influential organs of society, in order to communicate its policies, principles and values. This will create the nucleus of the message to be communicated.
- 2.13 Given that being a leader (either deployed or elected) does not automatically mean you are capacitated to communicate the ANC message, all political communicators, including ANC communicators including top ANC officials, NEC members, Members of Parliament, Ministers, MECs and MMCs must undergo political training on ANC political communication. Political school must be institutionalized in order for the ANC to be hegemonic in the society.
- 2.14 Part of the problem of the ANC engaging properly in the battle of ideas is the lack of an institutional structure that produces coherent messaging along the lines on one message and many voices.
- 2.15 War rooms must be institutionalised and capacitated to undertake media monitoring and rapid responses, capture the narratives and proactively respond to the communication challenges. The ANC must use podcasts and group emails for its communicators.
- 2.16 The ANC must communicate ANC decisions directly with its membership after meetings of its structures. The machinery must complement its



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sent to its structures, to assist in striving for coherence and coherent messaging. Briefing notes must be produced and disseminated throughout the organisation.

- 2.17 The National Conference noted progress made in developing Communication and Media Policy, including social media, to guide its cadres in public engagements and on how to maintain hegemony in the battle of ideas, with utmost discipline and adherence to policy. The NEC must conclude the policy for implementation to guide the conduct of ANC structures and members. This policy once adopted must bind all ANC structures and members. The policy must be finalized and communicated within 6 (six) month after the 54th National Conference.
- 2.18 The ANC must develop strategies and creative ideas on communication platforms on how to ideologically empower young cadres.
- 2.19 In the political education programme, there must be a module on communication, focusing on ANC political communication.
- 2.20 The ANC cannot suppress voices of its members, instead it must train its leaders on political communication. ANC members' rights to speak must remain protected within the context of organisational discipline. The key is ensuring that the organisation does the right thing, is representative of the people and therefore has its members proudly associated with its actions and decisions. The right to speak must be exercised in a responsible manner.
- 2.21 The ANC must speak a language that embodies and unite all South Africans, as the leader of society.
- 2.22 PCO offices must be standardized, equipped and utilized maximally.
- 2.23 The ANC must use community and small commercial media.
- 2.24 There is a need to empower Ward Committees and Community Development Workers (CDWs) with communication skills, information and integrate their activities.
- 2.25 Government communications must be improved, coherent and centralized through GCIS. Government communicators, including Spokespersons must comply with government policy on communications which should be finalized and approved within twelve months after the 54th National Conference. GCIS should play a central role in government communications and must be adequately capacitated to achieve this. More emphasis should be placed on the coordination role of GCIS to en-

sure coherent messaging.

- 2.26 Existing coordination mechanisms such as the Government Communicators Forum should be strengthened. There is a need to review the location of the GCIS in the Presidency as a way to give it the necessary authority to oversee and coordinate government communications.
- 2.27 Izimbizo concept needs to be strengthened to ensure that it achieves its purpose that is unmediated and direct communications with the people. More creative ways are needed to enable and achieve this.
- 2.28 The Conference reaffirmed that the ANC is the strategic centre of power and all deployed cadres must be guided by this revolutionary understanding.

3. On ICT

- 3.1 Noting that the 4th Industrial Revolution is driven by the increased use of and adaptation of ICT tools in all human activities. Technological developments have now made possible machine-to-machine (M2M) communications, robots and autonomous systems able to operate with or without human interventions in all spheres of human activity. The 4th Industrial Revolution is a focus of attention, as it contains within it possibilities of disrupting current economic and social structures profoundly over the next 20 years. The task for South Africa is to plan effectively, position itself optimally and engage proactively with these rapidly evolving technologies.
- 3.2 The 4th Industrial Revolution disrupt the current practices and brings new opportunities, restructures other industries, has profound implications for the jobs market, etc., and as such, there is a need to explore and maximize new opportunities and invest in digital skills, improve Government efficiency to deliver services, ready Government for the 4th Industrial Revolution, create opportunities for SMMEs, etc.
- 3.3 The ICT sector has a significant and growing impact on the GDP and is part of the macro economic considerations as it provides opportunities for SA to get out of the current economic challenges. Solutions must be practical given the huge investments needed to rollout broadband and prepare for the Internet of Things, in such a constrained economy.
- 3.4 Many of the ICT sector challenges have been previously raised. The high cost for South Africans of communication needs to be addressed through policy and regulatory systems. In addition there is a need to increase the rollout of broadband infra-

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structure especially in rural areas. The ICT sector

needs to be transformed at all levels. As previously stated, the rationalization of state owned companies is a priority. The biggest challenge of ANC employees is to implement ANC resolutions and policies with speed.

Hereby Resolve that:

- 3.5 The ANC must ensure the implementation of the resolutions to support the Post Office, including that Government business must be availed to the Post Office through intergovernmental framework to maximize the use and value of the Post Office infrastructure to achieve its developmental mandate. The Post Office should continuously review its business models to cope with the changes arising from the digital industrial revolution.
- 3.6 Private postal operators should also contribute to universal service obligations.
- 3.7 There must be a strong regulatory intervention to deal with the question of the high cost to communicate and the ANC must support the campaign for data to fall and the monopolization of data. This is regarded as stifling economic inclusion.
- 3.8 The need to optimize ICT opportunities through the use SMMEs in ICT to drive the economy is critical. Resolve that government must put efforts to ensure that SMME opportunities are created in the whole ICT value chain, and further encourage black industrialists participation in the country. There must be a deliberate legislative intervention to promote local content, production, hardware, and further create an enabling environment for innovation in areas of software development, applications development in the black industrialists programme to ensure SMMEs development.
- 3.9 Government must review the mandate of SITA to not only be procurer but enable local capacity production of software and hardware products, unbundle the value chain, etc. SITA should be transformed and repurposed to provide high quality information technology services aligned to the digital age.
- 3.10 All children of South Africa must get equal opportunities in terms of infrastructure in all schools, if we are to maximize the opportunities of the 4th Industrial Revolution. Government should invest nationally in a paperless system based on digitized and automation of systems. This should form the basis of our policy commitment to introduce smart, paperless schools throughout the country in line with Education Operation Phakisa in Education which should be prioritized.

- 3.11 As part of rationalization of SoCs, consideration must be made to implement the decision to merge BBI and Sentech. This should be underpinned by the overall policy on SOC Reform to improve service delivery and investment in infrastructure.
- 3.12 Ensure requisite skills (including policy making) in the SOCs, and the respective Departments charged to lead this sector.
- 3.13 Digitizing, automating systems will assist in minimizing crime, coordinating information about citizens and Government services, integrating education system, Home Affairs, Justice Cluster, including digitising ANC membership management system amongst others.
- 3.14 Public servants at all levels including Accounting Authority, Accounting Officers, communication heads, etc. must be capacitated with IT and digital skills, as part of the preparation for the 4th Industrial Revolution.
- 3.15 Government should use ICT to address the communications needs of people with disabilities, use of Apps to address government needs and services, etc.
- 3.16 The ANC mandate government to establish the 4th Industrial Revolution Commission and develop the relevant strategies and policies to respond to the new digitization needs. The Commission should include all stakeholders in the economy.
- 3.17 There is a need to strengthen organs of state including ICASA to cope with the unprecedented changes due to the 4th Industrial revolution.
- 3.18 Government should consider the reconfiguration of the existing Government departments to embrace technological convergence. There is a need to have provincial champions at provincial and district government level to drive this agenda.
- 3.19 Targets for youth, women and blacks in the equity of service providers in the ICT industry must be established as part of radical socio-economic transformation.
- 3.20 There is a need to strengthen capability for cybersecurity to enhance protection of critical databases, systems and critical infrastructure resources, including protecting society against fake news, cybercrime, cyber-attacks and hacking etc.
- 3.21 Interventions must include strategies to ensure that SA content and websites become favorites countrywide.
- 3.22 Government must build capacity and strengthen the Media & ICT SETA agency to play a critical role in SMME development including the youth with digital skills in preparation for the 4th Industrial Revolution.

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- 3.23 Education departments must change curriculum to prepare for the 4th Industrial Revolution. Development of digital skills, reskilling, and target of new entrants in the labour market should deliberately target rural areas and provinces in preparation for the digital economy.
- 3.24 There must be priority and speed in the implementation of the ICT White Paper to encourage transformation, ensuring open access to critical spectrum resource usage, ensure the strong market competition and accelerate rapid deployment of electronic communications infrastructure and services including the roll-out of the Wireless Open Access Network.
- 3.25 In preparation for and to enable the 4th Industrial Revolution, government should establish specialized ICT institutions of higher education, and the use of specialized TVETs for the massification of e-skills. There must also be a consideration of the model of dedicated University on ICT, data, innovations and new innovations, to promote creativity, innovation and ready the country for the 4th Industrial Revolution in line with the 53rd National Conference Resolutions.
- 3.26 The Postbank must be licensed and capacitated to play meaningful role in providing banking services before the end of term of office of the current Government administration.
- 3.27 The ANC must further encourage efforts by Government and the private sector to deploy broadband infrastructure and services and also ensure accessibility of free Wi-Fi as part of the development of economic inclusion. Free Wi-Fi must also be provided in rural areas as well as Metros and in all public schools, clinics, libraries, etc.
- 3.28 Strategies must be developed to derive benefits from the opportunities including through taxes, incentives, etc. Approach to ICT policy should locate the sector within the broader economic policy context thereby positioning it to drive the restructuring of the SA economy.
- 3.29 Policies and strategies must ensure asymmetrical regulation of telecommunications services to address existing dominance in the mobile telecommunications industry, fair and open competition, and the growth of SMMEs and MVNOs.
- 4.2 ANC must invest in developing and producing the best cadres, win hegemony, trust and belief in the society, in order for it to be the leader of society.
- 4.3 Government must be capacitated and restructured in preparation for the 4th Industrial Revolution, in a manner that will optimize efforts to grab the opportunities. The 4th Industrial Revolution must be regarded as an economic catalyst.
- 4.4 The local content industry development strategy should be introduced without delay alongside the review of the broadcasting policy and in line with the digital broadcasting plan.
- 4.5 The SABC needs rebranding and turnaround to ensure that focus is on content and less on governance issues and challenges. The SABC should primarily focus on cultural identity and development as a repository of our heritage and identity.
- 4.6 Language is important in enhancing and ensuring effective communication, with emphasis on supporting indigenous languages. Language used in the public media especially the SABC should be accessible.
- 4.7 Digital broadcasting migration programme remains a priority in the country. The success of this initiative will depend on inter alia the availability of new content that appeals to the broader South African viewership, and the uptake of STBs and Integrated Digital Television sets by the non-subsidised households. Government should therefore continue to mobilize all role players and the general public to participate in this endeavour as it also brings other social and economic benefits.
- 4.8 Digital migration switchover should be completed by June 2019. The completion of this programme will also enable the freeing of the critical radio frequency spectrum needed for the rollout of broadband.
- 4.9 The advent of digital broadcasting technologies that allow multichannel platforms should also ensure the representation in all languages.
- 4.10 DTT presents an opportunity for the SABC to introduce multichannel programming to ensure its viability as a broadcaster of choice and this could ensure that Parliamentary channel, community TV could be on the SABC's platform. SABC must be positioned as a content provider of choice, protect and be a repository of our cultural identity, etc.
- 4.11 A TV channel to broadcast parliamentary news, e-government, and other local content information addressing development must be established. The channel should be interactive to enable public participation in the unfolding discourse on various topical issues.

4. On Broadcasting

Hereby Resolve that:

- 4.1 The strategic ownership of media assets is important but must be understood in the context of viewership and listenership. Sustainability of broadcasting services is a challenge and need to be taken into consideration.



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regulate OTTs (Over-The-Top).

- 4.12 Broadcasting policy review should be concluded without delay, and should apply to the entire broadcasting landscape and not just the SABC & should be underpinned by the desire to create a diverse broadcasting landscape. Policy should aim to attain over 70% local content quotas within five years from the 54th National Conference.
- 4.13 DTT should also include skills development and capacity building throughout the value chain, consistent with the Broadcasting Digital Migration policy and other aspects of the DTT programme.
- 4.14 Digital disruptions affect the media industry throughout the value chain hence the need for an economy-wide strategy on the impact of the 4th Industrial Revolution.
- 4.15 ANC must through government policy and competition interventions ensure a fair, regulated subscription broadcasting television addressing market competition issues.
- 4.16 The ANC must ensure that policy and regulatory interventions are strengthened in order to address the existing monopoly in the pay television market.
- 4.17 Support for community broadcasting must be improved and strengthened. This must also include increase in funding for Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) to address signal distribution and other challenges in both radio and television services. Other innovative measures should be considered to ensure the sustainability and viability of this important sector.
- 4.18 There must be more efforts on investing in research & development and innovation.
- 4.19 As part of the efforts to increase the uptake and usage of ICTs, there must be active action driven to foster partnership with institutions of higher learning and to also encourage universities to specialize in skills in digital technologies.
- 4.20 There is a need to redefine and clarify the role of the different SOCs in the context of the digital age, namely: NEMISA, USAASA, MDDA, and rationalize their mandate. This should be done within the context of the SOC Reform and should include the regulatory institutions such as ZDNA and the Film and Publications Board.
- 4.21 Government must support the development of digital radio and this should be understood in the context of the need to support the rollout of diverse, affordable broadcasting receivers.
- 4.22 SEZs should be used as manufacturing centers for ICT and broadcasting devices, gadgets such as IDTV.
- 4.23 Internet radio and Internet TV should also receive attention as part of the framework to

- 4.24 Small businesses owned by young people should be licensed to provide ICT and broadcasting services taking advantage of new innovations such as Over the Top and Internet broadcasting.
- 4.25 Cyber Security policy should also protect broadcasting services.
- 4.26 The local broadcasting industry should also focus/ prioritise content from the African continent.
- 4.27 Television signal should be improved especially along the geographic marginal areas and borders of our country enabled through digital broadcast transmission.

5. On Media Transformation, media diversity and accountability mechanisms

Hereby Resolve that:

- 5.1 ANC policy promotes media diversity to ensure media transformation thereby gaining plurality of views in society, and therefore is against dominance.
- 5.2 There has been some changes in the sector post the 53rd National Conference, including changes of ownership in print, the introduction of the

New Age, the new ownership of Independent Newspapers by Sekunjalo, birth of the Community Newspaper Initiative (CNI), growth of the Association of Independent Publishers, birth of Association of Black Communications Practitioners, birth of Forum for Journalists Transformation, numerous licenses awarded (subscription, commercial radio in the Free State and Eastern Cape as well as in cities, community radio and TV), Press Freedom Commission (PFC), Digital and Print Media Transformation Task Team (PDMTTT), reviewed Press Council and Press Code, withdrawal of Independent Newspaper from the Press Ombudsman, closure of the Print and Digital Media SA (PMSA), etc.

- 5.3 There exist a number of community and small commercial print media, who all face the challenge of sustainability. The acquisition of small established titles/small commercial media by the big players work against the policy of media diversity as espoused by the ANC and warrant further consideration.
- 5.4 Government (under DoC) held the Print and Digital Media Transformation Summit and a Discussion Document has been developed and will follow the public inquiry through Parliament on the measures and steps needed to ensure media transformation.



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- 5.5 There is a need to review the ANC Media Charter and conduct a Parliamentary inquiry on the desirability and feasibility of a media appeals tribunal.
- 5.6 The review should include the Press Freedom Commission (PFC) recommendations in the Parliamentary processes.
- 5.7 The empowerment charter should promote Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment in the print media sector, and strengthen the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) to support community and commercial entities towards more diversity
- 5.8 The Competition Commission to investigate all possible anti-competitive practices in the print and commercial media. In addition the Competition Commission should investigate the barriers to market access by small and medium enterprises. There is a need to enhance the sanctions that can be imposed by the Competition Commission through the review of applicable laws.
- 5.9 To prioritise transformation of the advertising industry.
- 5.10 Media transformation must include ownership and control, racism in the media and progressive ideas. The transformation of the advertising industry through the implementation of the Advertising Charter must form part and parcel of media transformation.
- 5.11 The utilisation of outdoor media and billboards platforms must be explored. Outdoor media, especially in light of digitization which needs to be transformed as it is currently dominated by international companies, is important.
- 5.12 The ANC must support community and small commercial media including efforts to prevent the take-over of community newspapers by the big companies, thereby increasing media diversity.
- 5.13 In line with the previous resolutions, government should use its advertising spend to advance diversity. Government advertising to community and small commercial media must be increased in line with the 30% set aside provisions. The 30% of media buying from community media needs to be implemented without delay.
- 5.14 Print media empowerment charter must be developed to drive media development, transformation and diversity, informed by the radical socio-economic transformation approach. Print media ownership remains highly racialised & this calls for transformation throughout the value chain. Print media will remain even in the digital environment & thus transformation should remain a priority. There is a thin line between media ownership and control thus we need a holistic approach to transformation. The ANC must appreciate that having black editors does not mean transformation.
- 5.15 An enabling environment must be created for SMMEs to encourage innovation and creativity in order to position our country for the Fourth Industrial Revolution and to create necessary and relevant jobs.



