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Department:
Communications
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

Sentech to reconnect community radio stations suspended for non-payment

20 April 2018

The Minister of Communications, Ms. Nomvula Mokonyane today, Friday, 20 April 2018, met with Sentech, the National Community Radio Forum (NCRF), the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) and the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA).

The meeting was scheduled to resolve the impasse between Sentech and numerous community radio stations whose transmission signal was terminated for failure to pay outstanding signal distribution fees owed to Sentech.

Fifteen (15) community radio stations were last week suspended from broadcasting and a further seventeen (17) would have been affected in an attempt by Sentech to recover R 33 million that it is owed by community radio stations.

"We have managed to broker an agreement between the parties that will be aided by our support to the community radio stations through the MDDA. Sentech has agreed to reconnect all suspended stations and will not effect any further suspensions in the short-term whilst we seek to find sustainable solutions to the financial viability of the community media sector."

"We have also committed to further engage the community radio sector through a process aimed at strengthening governance, financial management, revenue generation and skills development within the sector. The above will create an environment wherein community radio stations are geared to attract investment and advertising expenditure from both the public and private sector" said Minister Mokonyane.

The Minister has also committed to hosting a Community Radio Sector Summit to be held in May 2018, that will provide a platform to further explore the variety of challenges and opportunities that obtain within the sector.

"The community radio sector is a critical communication platform to ensure we provide our people with access to information in their communities as a means towards the creation of an



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informed citizenry. It is for this reason that we cannot allow the sector to collapse" concluded Minister Mokonyane.

The government is committed to ensuring that the community media sector is provided the requisite support to ensure its effectiveness in providing information to the most vulnerable and sometimes isolated communities.

Issued by the Department of Communications

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