

# Speech by Deputy Minister Ms Pinky Kekana during the Limpopo Provincial Government Communicators Forum

**05 July 2018**

Premier Mr Chupu Mathabatha, Sekhukhune District Mayor: Cllr Keamotseng Ramaila, Speaker of the Provincial Legislature, Government Communicators from all spheres of government, Distinguished guests and ,Ladies and gentlemen.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Honourable Premier of Limpopo Mr Chupu Mthabatha for kind invitation to the Limpopo Provincial Government Communications Forum to share and reflect on the status of community media in the country and as well as its role in communicating government programs.

I believe the decision to convene this forum is to enable us to share views, strategies and tactics on a number of critical issues confronting the Communications sector. Working together and by joining hands, we can become the change we want to see.

As we are all our aware government has declared 2018 to

be the centenary Year of Nelson Mandela and Albertina Sisulu. This gathering comes at a time when we are less than a week away from the centenary birth of our liberation stalwart Nelson Mandela. As Government there are a number of initiatives in place to pay homage to our world renowned icons.

One of the simplest ways to do so is to reflect on the wisdom of Nelson Mandela, during the course of his incredible life. I think it is an opportune moment to reflect on his temperament towards the media. As the First President post-apartheid on the media, Mandela said “none of our irritations with the perceived inadequacies of the media should ever allow us to even suggest faintly that the independence of the press could be compromised or coerced.”

The Fourth Estate is an indispensable component of democracy, and as Government communicators you are a conduit between the media, public and government. This relationship is important for a thriving democracy and to ensure that government communicates with the public on matters pertaining to the improvement of their lives.

Government is an information hub for society and you are the messengers and purveyors of critical information. In the

age of the fourth industrial revolution we can no longer communicate as though the age of the digitisation is not upon us.

Over the past couple of weeks I have had the pleasure of addressing three International corporations who are deeply embedded in the Internet of things debate and the fourth industrial revolution, namely IBM, Facebook and Google.

With all of these companies, we learnt that universal access to information for all citizens can be achieved. For Instance through IBM we learnt that the age of just communicating with citizens via telephone is long gone. With the advent of artificial intelligence we can find ways of fielding more queries and producing qualitative answers to citizen enquiries.

Which can drastically enhance our government services. We have seen how citizen queries can be handle by Artificial Intelligence, this creates new synergies for government and improves the turnaround time and service delivery.

For us to be on par with the private sector, we need to start to prepare our employees to be equipped for the digital age and the fourth industrial revolution, thus ensuring that

government is the centre of creating what has now been termed new collar jobs.

In my engagements I have learnt that there are many programs and projects especially for the Youth in building applications that make government interact with citizens seamlessly and efficiently, whilst creating jobs for our youth.

At Facebook we saw how the news cycle as we know it is no longer influenced by media houses anymore. More and more we are seeing news content being generated from social media for major news outlets. In the same vein GCIS has been able to reach 1.9 million users in raising awareness about the upcoming 100 Men March on the 10th of July 2018.

With Google we have seen how having a web presence is not good enough. One needs the skills to ensure that the government websites are responsive and structured in a manner which generates the requisite traffic to enable citizens to access information easily.

Public private partnerships for government communicators to improve their skills and enhance our content. We need to ensure that our messages are optimised by all means possible. As such we will be working closely with various

stakeholders who can help us amplify governments in society.

Program Director,

Our country needs a communicators who will make a meaningful contribution to government's pursuit of a growing economy that stands ready to respond to the needs of our people.

Since my appointment, I have come to realise that we need to act swiftly as government to address the major challenges that face community media.

Community media is a vital platform that can be used by all spheres government for the dissemination of information, because, it is a strategic means through which development communication can be achieved.

For instance, the community participation in the political life of local communities and the decisions taken by the Councillors in local and district municipality is an important aspect of democracy-building, therefore this could be easily shared easily through community media.

Community media facilitates the participation of citizens, this becomes a mechanism in the hands of citizens to

monitor government programs, and moreover it also creates the capacity for those of us who are making public policies to be closer to the actual community needs.

Given the importance of well-informed citizens and or active citizenry the development of community participation, and for the overall development of democracy at the local community level, community media focuses precisely on providing sound information to community within local community.

Community media ought to operate with a model that recognises the active audience. As Government we need to support community media by providing daily and unique content, direct funding through grants, training and support; and advertising.

It is our responsibility as Government, in particular GCIS and Communicators in all spheres of government to support all community media platforms and not to have preferences in community media. Community media builds a community of audiences and listeners through news bulletins, talk shows and government campaigns.

Despite the challenges confronting the sector, government will not tire in our effort to support this sector. We appeal to

all of you to join us in this important journey that is in the interest of improving the lives of our communities.

Government regards the community media sector as an important platform to strengthen diversity and builds local economies, cover topics that are relevant to the community, encourages community discussion and debate, and lastly participation is the key defining feature of community media.

Government and community media continues to collaborate to strengthen the partnership in pursuit of their respective missions and mandates. Community newspapers and radio stations give a voice to marginalised communities and play an important role in the development of our communities. Community media has the ability to provide an opportunities to the communities to support each other and find solutions that are tailored to their specific needs.

The of Ministry of Communications urges Government communicators that in fulfilling the requirement for broader access to government information and services they must use community media for public engagement, successfully connecting with the public, satisfying their need for information and increasing the public understanding of government initiatives and policies.

I would to encourage all spheres of government to advertise in the community based media to contribute towards access to information and revenue to sustain themselves against the threat of closure because of financial constraints.

It is your responsibility as communicators to do a cost benefit analysis on the adverts you generate and subsequently pay for.

It doesn't makes sense for government to advertise the administration positions or local meetings taking into account the difficulty in distributing the mainstream media. Surely, the most reasonable thing to do is to advertise such meetings and employment positions in the community media to reach local candidates and targeted community members.

Government is finalising the regulation on 30 percent (%) advertising which will compel you to spend its 30 % on community media. I have also interacted with community media and their representatives to get their act together to ensure they comply with all laws and regulations in order for them to do business with government.

Program Director;



I am looking forward to the outcome of this Communicators Forum so that collectively we can map out a sustainable way forward for this community media sector that is at the coalface of development communication.

The Ministry of Communications will host a community broadcasting Indaba on the 30th – 31st July 2018, Birchwood Hotel.

One of the expectations of the indaba is to advise government on how it can best meet its objectives to ensure a sustainable community media and corresponding advertising by all three (3) spheres of Government, so that the sector and South African can benefit from digital migration and associated platforms and technologies. There only way we can develop our community media is by expressing our confidence in them a tangible way.

I hereby by extend the invitation to the summit and I am elated that you could join us to discuss ways in which corporate governance and sustainability can be restored in the community media sector for the benefit of communities. These communities rely heavily on the sector for their education, information and entertainment needs.

I thank you!!

