



PREMIER SOCCER LEAGUE

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Chairman's Speaking Notes for ICASA Presentation

(Public Hearings on the Supplementary Discussion Document regarding the Inquiry into
Subscription Television Broadcasting Services- Thursday, 10 July 2025)

Introductory remarks

- This Inquiry has been going on for a while and we, as the PSL, have shared our views along the way, focusing on how we sell our rights and the disastrous consequences of the earlier proposals to regulate content acquisition
- We remain of the strong view that the earlier proposals have disastrous consequences, were not appropriate and should not be pursued
- The PSL commends ICASA for recognising that the world of content is changing and that consumers are engaging with content differently
- Most importantly for us, as the PSL, we commend ICASA for recognising that there is no basis to regulate how content is sold and acquired
- This is the correct conclusion – it is important for the development and sustainability of sport in South Africa

Substantive remarks

- We have explained since the beginning of the Inquiry how we sell our rights through an open, competitive, non-discriminatory tender process that any broadcaster or OTT service can participate in if they are interested in our content
 - o This tender process started in 2007, and we have run it regularly in 2012, 2019 and 2023
- Before we introduced this tender process,
 - o The SABC had the rights
 - o It had the right of first refusal and the right to match any offer that the PSL received from any other bidder
 - o The contract did not contain any firm commitments from the SABC on investment and broadcast. Instead, it simply required the SABC to use its best endeavours

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- The consequences for the PSL were significant
 - The PSL was severely underfunded, there was underinvestment
 - The product was of a lower quality than now and
 - Fewer matches were broadcast on television
- Our open, competitive, non-discriminatory tender process does not guarantee anyone such privileges as the SABC had, not even SuperSport
 - It is designed to avoid the problems we ended up with under the SABC contract
 - For the most part, we have succeeded and managed to develop a much better outcome
- Through this process, we hear that some broadcasters have interest in our content through court papers and submissions to ICASA, but not through participation in our open, non-discriminatory competitive tender process
 - The same broadcasters do not bother to respond to our invitation to tender for the rights, and in a timely way
 - Apart from 2007, we have not received any expressions of interest and bids from e.tv for the PSL rights
 - The SABC failed to submit tender documents in 2019 and again in 2023 despite accommodating them with an extension of the deadline at some point
- SuperSport has been successful in acquiring the PSL rights because they participated in the each bidding process
 - SuperSport does not enjoy perpetual access to the rights, they have to bid like everyone else and provide as compelling a bid as anyone else
 - Each time, SuperSport submitted its tender documents on time
 - Their tender had fair value for our rights and their proposal had the best sporting proposition in terms of broadcast and investment

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- It appears that now that SuperSport and the PSL have invested in developing the PSL product (football itself) and the content into an attractive proposition, some broadcasters are now interested in the content
 - o Some even demand access to the content without paying a single Rand for it, seeking to use regulators and courts to have their way under the disguise of public interest
 - o Some of these are private commercial businesses, with wealthy private owners and are much larger than the PSL and its clubs combined
- Our rights selling process has produced huge benefits for soccer fans, the PSL and its clubs, broadcasters, the National Teams, small business that depend on soccer for a livelihood, most of whom are historically disadvantaged
 - o Soccer fans have a much better quality product owing to the large investments that the PSL and SuperSport have made since 2007
 - o Soccer fans today have access to a greater number of matches than they historically did under the SABC contract
 - o We invested in and launched new competitions like the MultiChoice Diski Challenge, whose fruits can be seen today
 - Young players that are in club first teams and playing for the national teams benefitted from this investment
 - They got early exposure and opportunity through the MultiChoice Diski Challenge
 - Fans in communities where MultiChoice Diski Challenge matches were played have benefitted by getting free access to matches in their local stadiums
 - o The PSL and its clubs are better funded than they ever were under the SABC contract
 - o The lives of those who depend on soccer for a living (players, match officials, club staff etc) are much better than they were before
 - o National Teams at all levels are benefitting from the development of sport that stems from the investments made by the PSL and the sustainability that comes from that

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- The PSL is one of the more stable and attractive leagues in developing countries because of the approach to its rights selling process and its commitment to investment in the product
 - o We do not want broadcasters who just want to extract value riding on the backs of the PSL without investing in it
- One of the biggest threats to the PSL is limited alternatives of content buyers which threaten to erode its funding and investments in continuous development of the product (football itself) and the content that fans watch on television

Concluding remarks

- We thank you for yet another opportunity to make representations in this Inquiry
- As we said when we started, we commend ICASA for recognising that content markets are changing and the way consumers engage with content is also changing
- Most importantly, we commend ICASA for recognising that there is no need to regulate the way rights are sold or acquired as this will have disastrous consequences for sport in South Africa
- We support this position
- We urge ICASA to resist, as we do, the self-serving interests of broadcasters who are not interested in acquiring and investing in the PSL content for themselves and instead seek to access the content through ill-advised regulatory proposals even if it causes damage to sport, clubs, and the long-term interests of fans
- The PSL welcomes all those interested in its content to participate in its open, non-discriminatory competitive tender process, and to invest in the development of sport in South Africa

Dr Irvin Khoza
Chairman

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