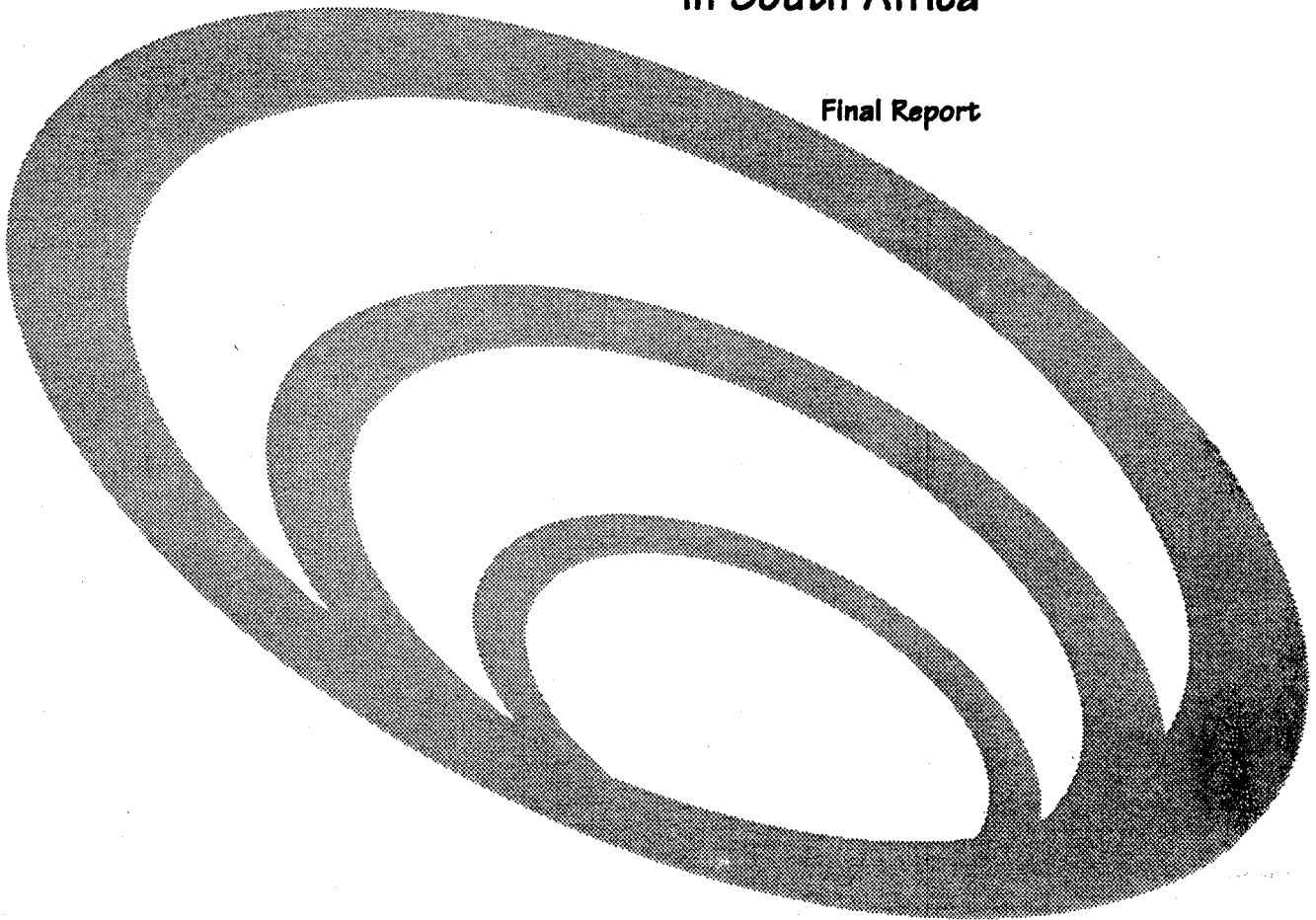
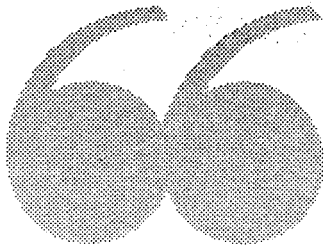


COMMUNICATIONS 2000

A vision for government
communications
in South Africa

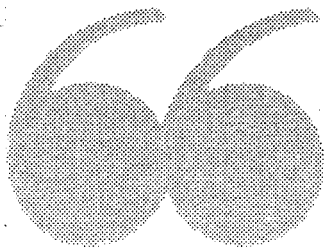
Final Report





The Task Group would like to recognise the support and professional services provided by the Task Group Secretariat throughout its work. The members of the Secretariat were: Melody Emmett (Coordinator), Marlize Dreyer and Karel Botha.

Sue de Villiers was the principal researcher and writer, and the Group was also assisted by Pule Moloto-Molamu. We thank those concerned for the long hours and hard work which was put in.



Contents

	Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
MANDATE OF THE TASK GROUP	10
CHAPTER 1: How the task group worked	11
CHAPTER 2: The Context for government communications: framework and constraints	13
CHAPTER 3: The current picture: Communications in 1996	19
CHAPTER 4: The South African Media Environment	27
CHAPTER 5: Development challenges	33
CHAPTER 6: International Perspectives: Communicating in a democracy	39
CHAPTER 7: South Africa seen from abroad	44
CHAPTER 8: Conclusions and the way forward	46
RECOMMENDATIONS	NUMBERS
STRUCTURES	
Cabinet	1-2 56
Government Communication and Information System (GCIS)	3-20 58
Ministries and Departments	21-23 64
SACS	24 66
Communications 2000	25-26 67
FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES	
Presidency	27-30 68
Communications 2000	31-39 69
CSA	40-53 72
Personnel and Training	54-58 77
South Africa in the World	59-63 82
Information Development	64-67 83

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Open Democracy Legislation	68	86
Repeal of Legislation	69	87
Plain Language	70-73	87
South African Languages	74	88
Access to Documentation	75-76	88

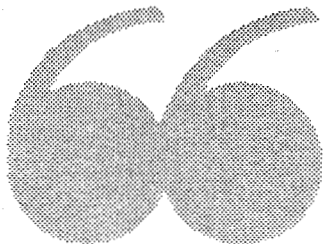
MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

Funding Public Broadcaster	77	89
Funding Community Media	78-79	90
Channel Africa	80	90
Media Diversity	81-83	91

TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	92
------------------------------	----

SUBMISSIONS, PRESENTATIONS, MEETINGS	93
--------------------------------------	----

LIST OF ANNEXURES	96
-------------------	----



Deputy President Thabo Mbeki

We have pleasure in submitting the report of Comtask completed according to the mandate which you established in January.

In doing so, we would like to record appreciation for the enthusiastic response which we received from hundreds of South Africans in all walks of life, and of the contributions made by professional and community organisations, and all levels of government.

The report also benefitted from the input and comments of senior officials and citizens from over twenty countries around the world, who gave generously of their time and ideas.

We would like to record appreciation for the substantial financial and technical support which this exercise received from the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the United Nations Development Programme.

Finally, we would like to pay special tribute to the contribution of the late Dr. Paul Lusaka, whose illness forced him to withdraw before the completion of the report. Dr Lusaka, a long standing friend of democracy and of South Africa, worked as a Commonwealth adviser during the most critical phase of our research, and made a major contribution to our work.

Mandla Langa
Convenor

Members:

David Dison

Steve Godfrey

Willem de Klerk

Raymond Louw

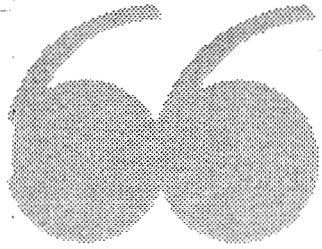
Stephen Mncube

Sebiletso Mokone-Matabane

Val Pauquet

Tshepo Rantho

Mathatha Tsedu



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHAPTER 1: METHOD OF WORK

The Task Group consulted over an eight month period with South African institutions, professional bodies and all levels of government. Thirty seven meetings were held in public, sixty one presentations made and one hundred and fifty written submissions received. The Task Group also consulted with nineteen government and four international organisations. Specialised media monitoring, and a study of media ownership and control were commissioned, and all departments, ministries and provinces completed questionnaires and many additional players were interviewed by a researcher.

CHAPTER 2: FRAMEWORK AND CONSTRAINTS

The findings of the Task Group are framed in the context of the new constitutional democracy, the political imperatives of social and economic development, and also seek to reflect the thinking and best communications practice of successful democracies in the developed and developing world. They also take account of the legacy of apartheid, the poverty of its communications systems, and the need to open up channels of access, particularly at local community level.

A new communications system is an economic and political imperative for the "information age". Its purpose must be to provide a network throughout the country which provides every citizen with the information required to live and to control their lives.

The new government communication and information system needs to be better coordinated and more focussed in its messages. It should strengthen the capability of government to communicate its policies to the people, and be streamlined, credible, cost-effective and highly professional. To do this it will need to engage better with civil society, creating a dialogue between government and the public.

Such delivery requires leadership from the centre of government - the Presidency^F - but also decentralised implementation through ministries, departments and provincial and local government. For this, a more professional cadre of communicators is required, as well as better cooperation with the media and community at large.

The Task Group report is written within a given framework which includes the new constitutional principles and the citizen's "right to know", the government objective of creating a leaner and more efficient public service, affirmative action, and the importance of pluralism in the ownership and control of media.

The report delineates critical constraints which new policies should take into account. These are: the low status of government communicators, a tradition of inflexible and inward-looking bureaucracy, a high level of concentration of media ownership, a journalism profession impoverished by Apartheid, obsolete media legislation and finally, the reality of severe resource constraints on government.

^F The term 'Presidency' is used to refer to the offices of the Presidential and Deputy President throughout.

CHAPTER 3: GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS IN 1996

National and Provincial Government currently employ 1,095 and 406 communication personnel respectively, and spend a total of R380m per year on communications staff, operations and publicity. No common standards exist for measuring communication costs, which make firm figures difficult to obtain. However, very wide variations in resource allocations throughout departments and provinces are apparent.

SACS employs over half the communication personnel of national government. It suffers from poor morale and no mandate. It has a low level of interaction with departments and provinces and meets their needs fitfully. A majority of government communicators at all levels favours a central service agency with a more defined focus, and provinces want SACS regional structures to be discontinued.

Overall, Government lacks central coordination in messaging, adequate planning of information campaigns, and communications has a low priority as reflected in its budgets and the status of communicators.

CHAPTER 4: THE SOUTH AFRICAN MEDIA

This year has seen a dilution of the historically high level of concentration in the media through empowerment deals, and further foreign investment is anticipated. Media diversity has been significantly advanced through IBA licensing of community radio, and the sale of SABC regional radio stations. Particular concern exists about the distribution monopoly which may inhibit the viability of small or new titles. Public funding for the national broadcaster and for community media is identified as important for attaining media diversity. Government should also take steps to remove anachronistic legislation which compromises press freedom.

Government and media relations in a democracy are always sensitive, and occasionally acrimonious. Apartheid weakened the profession in South Africa, and there is agreement in the industry that capacity-building is needed to improve standards, and to open the profession and media management to disadvantaged groups. The Task Group survey indicated that the South African media, especially the press, lacks experienced journalists able to cover stories in depth and in context.

CHAPTER 5: DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

A fundamental need of government communications is to reach the majority of the population, especially the disadvantaged. Inadequate public infrastructure in broadcasting and telecommunications is an obstacle to this - with the exception of radio it fails to reach the majority. A closely coordinated strategy to extend this infrastructure is required within government. Private sector finance and expertise is essential, and there is also a need to make better use of existing public infrastructure such as post offices and libraries. Simplicity of language and easy access is needed - new technology can overcome barriers of illiteracy and the cost of distribution, and multi-purpose information centres are a good way to facilitate access.

CHAPTER 6: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES - COMMUNICATING IN A DEMOCRACY

The Task Group surveyed government communication systems in 19 countries including ten developing countries. We found common trends and practices in these countries.

Effective media relations is always associated with a recipe of coordinated government messaging, led by professional communication officials with status, who work directly with and have free access to ministers and officials. Well-structured coordination and clear lines of responsibility are essential.

Government outreach includes a wide variety of methods, but places emphasis on electronic channels. Didactic messages or government "slots" are not particularly effective tools, and though not unusual in democracies are limited. Radio is a critical vehicle for reaching poor or remote communities. New technology and the use of the Internet are generally more advanced in other countries, including the developing countries visited, than in South Africa.

Most democracies have a central communication institution that handles government-wide services (e.g. training, analysis, advertising) but which is not a centralised voice of government. Decentralised communication is the most effective, where information is imparted from that point in government closest to the target audience.

CHAPTER 7: SOUTH AFRICA SEEN FROM ABROAD

South Africa needs a more focussed information drive with better cooperation between different branches of government involved in advancing interests abroad. Missions are seriously hampered in their promotion of South Africa by the lack of timely information on the background to decisions. Improved coordination in overseas visits by national and provincial leaders is important to avoid sending mixed or confusing messages. Most countries visited - including developing countries at a comparable economic level to South Africa - have a more integrated approach to foreign promotion, with better information services and on-line data. Despite enduring goodwill towards South Africa, more focus and better service to missions is vital to success in a highly competitive global economy.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD

A total of 83 recommendations is advanced. These are based on the premise that considerable savings to the public purse can be effected through a more modern, streamlined and effective communication system.

STRUCTURES (RECOMMENDATIONS 1-26)

Improved public access to government communication and information needs to be tied to improved telecommunication and broadcasting capacity. The challenge cross-cuts many departments. It is recommended that a Cabinet Committee on the Information Economy be established to oversee an integrated strategy, and that it be chaired by the Deputy President. The involvement of Cabinet in policy on a variety of aspects relating to the information economy is proposed.

The centre point of the Task Group's recommendations is the establishment of a Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) with three components:

- Media Liaison
- Communications Service Agency
- Provincial Liaison

The GCIS would ensure coordination, and be managed by a small unit in the Presidency led by a Head of Government Communications. The unit would also include senior officials with responsibility for media (Chief Spokesperson) and for Provincial Liaison.

Each Minister would also appoint a Head of Communications, either a public servant or contract employee, working direct from the Ministry and responsible for all aspects of departmental communications.

The proposed system would be introduced with the assistance of Communications 2000, a professional advisory and consultative body to the Presidency established for a two year period (1997 - 1998)

FUNCTIONS (RECOMMENDATIONS 27-53)

The functions of the above components would be as follows:

- Media Liaison would involve a regular (weekly) meeting between the Head of Government Communications and the Chief Spokesperson and the Head of Communications in departments.
- This would be the main locus of all government-wide coordination of messages, campaigns and information.
- The Communication Service Agency (CSA) would be a streamlined agency with a small highly professional staff. The CSA can deliver to its "clients" (departments, provinces, local government) the following key services: a development information service, professional training, bulk buying of advertising, campaign management advice, media services, opinion polling, information technology development (government Homepage), and coordination of overseas visitors. The CSA would also seek to promote a common identity and image for government.
- It is proposed that SACS be dissolved and relevant resources be subsumed under the CSA; personnel employed by SACS should be given preference in applying for posts in the CSA.
- A Provincial Liaison structure would be a standing body which brings together provincial communicators with the senior officials in the GCIS. The aim of this would be to identify areas of common concern and joint activities with mutual benefits.
- Communications 2000 would include the Head of the GCIS and CSA, plus experts from the private and community sectors providing their services pro bono. It would advise the Presidency on restructuring, the development of training and a government human resource development plan for communicators, improved international communication, plain language and accessibility, and media diversity issues. It would also help to draw up criteria for an annual planning cycle to measure communications budgets, performance and output across government.

PERSONNEL AND TRAINING (RECOMMENDATIONS 54-58)

The report recommends that government establish a professional stream within the public service for communications personnel. A skills and personnel audit should be conducted to assist the development of training, and staff should be appointed against a new set of professional criteria. It is proposed that a standardised training course be developed as a qualifying criterion. The advancement of affirmative action should be pursued.

A National Training Programme (NTP) for communication professionals should be established. It can be jointly funded and delivered the profession and appropriate NGOs and universities.

IMPROVING SOUTH AFRICA'S IMAGE IN THE WORLD (RECOMMENDATIONS 59-63)

It is recommended that the Department of Foreign Affairs lead the development of an integrated information system for overseas missions. DFA, together with DTI, SATOUR and other relevant departments should establish an information system on South Africa using the Internet and other mechanisms. Approval mechanisms for ministerial travel overseas should ensure that DFA/missions are informed to enable them to provide appropriate support, and similar cooperative mechanisms put in place for the overseas travel of provincial MEC's and other appropriate people.

INFORMATION DEVELOPMENT (RECOMMENDATIONS 64-67)

The report emphasises the importance of building a network of information delivery points across the country. Current initiatives to support Multipurpose Information Centres should receive support. The Department of Telecommunications proposal for the development of the role of post offices is of particular importance in this regard. Recommendations in this area cross-cut ministries and departments, and the Cabinet Committee on the Information Economy is recommended to advance this issue.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION (RECOMMENDATIONS 68-76)

A number of legislative matters are important for creating an environment of access to information including the Open Democracy Act and the removal of anachronistic legislation that impinges on the freedom of the press.

Greater use of plain language in all government documents and legislation is advocated. Policy in this regard is also referred to the Cabinet Committee on the Information Economy. It would also be a major cost-saving measure. It is recommended that braille and signing be incorporated into government communications plans.

Government departments and statutory bodies should be required to make all unclassified documents available in electronic form to the proposed government Homepage, and private bodies should not be accorded proprietary status of such material. Further efforts should be made to establish a system of cataloguing of all government documentation.

MEDIA ENVIRONMENT (RECOMMENDATIONS 77-83)

Funding for the development of the role of the national public broadcaster on a triennial basis is essential, and should be given priority by the Cabinet Committee on the Information Economy.

Support for the community media sector, on a matching finance basis with the industry and foreign donors, should be provided by government. This scheme should be delivered through a statutorily recognised media development agency.

Channel Africa is a national priority which should be financed by the state (not by the public broadcaster). The appropriate route for this financing is the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The overall issue of monopolies within the print media should be referred to the Competitions Board. Existing distributors of mass market newspapers be licensed with common carrier status in terms of legislation required to ensure fair and equitable treatment for the distribution of all newspapers and periodicals.

A parliamentary broadcast service similar to C-Span in the United States should be investigated in conjunction with the national public broadcaster.

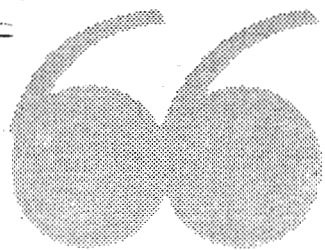
IMPLEMENTATION

A set of suggested milestones for the establishment of the proposed new system are outlined for the period up to December 31st 1998.



BRIEF FOR THE TASK GROUP ON GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS

1. The Task Group should review:
 - a) existing government communication *policy* at national, provincial and local level
 - b) existing government communication *structures* and *facilities* at national, provincial and local level
 - c) relationships between government communication *functions* at national, provincial; and local level
 - d) existing government *budgets* with special reference to personnel, operations and equipment
 - e) *relationships* between government communication structures and *non-governmental information providers*
 - f) government communication *training* and *capacity building* with special emphasis on *affirmative action*
 - g) *ownership* and *control* of South African media and to interpret how these affect government communication.
- 2 The Task Group should define existing information delivery mechanisms.
- 3 The Task Group should examine international communication functions with special emphasis on information dissemination.
- 4 The Task Group should do research on government communication policies, functions and structures in other democracies, with special emphasis on developing countries.
- 5 The Task Group should make recommendations on new government communication policy, functions, structures, personnel and budget at international, national, provincial and local level.



CHAPTER 1: HOW THE TASK GROUP WORKED

THE BRIEF

The mandate required the Task Group on Government Communications to examine government communications at the local, provincial, national and international level, and to make recommendations on new policies, structures and budgets. Particular mention was made of the need to examine training and affirmative action policies; of the way in which ownership of the media affects government communication; and of South Africa's international information dissemination. We were asked to draw on the experience and best practices of other democracies in making recommendations.

From the outset, the Task Group decided to work in a fully transparent manner. We have held 37 full meetings. Every one of these meetings has been open to the public and the media. The work plan we designed contained the following major elements:

1.1 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

In March, advertisements calling on individuals and institutions to make written and/or oral submissions to the Task Group were placed in national and regional newspapers, as well as on radio stations in nine official languages. We also opened a Homepage on the Internet for information and comments. Our aim was to meet our obligation by obtaining input from every sector of society. In total we have received 150 written submissions. Copies of all of the submissions are available. Some of the more pertinent have been included as appendices to this report.

1.2 CONSULTATIONS AND HEARINGS

A total of 61 presentations from a wide range of stakeholders and experts was made to the Task Group. In addition, Task Group members visited provinces to meet with provincial government, experts and community groups and spoke on community radio. We attended a two-day presentation by the South African Communications Service (SACS). We ourselves made a presentation to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Communications. A list of all submissions and presentations is included in the report.¹

1 See list of submissions made to the Task Group,

1.3 QUESTIONNAIRES AND RESEARCH

In March, a questionnaire was submitted to all Ministries, Departments and Provinces asking for basic data on staffing, budgetary resources, and working methods in communications and inviting further comment and suggestions.² This was carried out to meet objective 1 (e) of our mandate – reviewing the relationships between government communication structures and non-governmental information providers.

The Task Group also commissioned an independent survey of media coverage of government communications by the Media Monitoring Project (MMP).³ The MMP surveyed national and regional print and broadcast sources over the three-month period from March 31 to June 30. Research was also carried out by Mr Robin MacGregor⁴ to describe current ownership and control of the South African Media. These two activities were required to meet objective 1 (g) of our mandate – reviewing the ownership and control of South African media and to interpret how these affect government communications.

1.4 INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME

Objective 3 of our mandate required Comtask to examine South Africa's international information dissemination; and Objective 4 to research international perspectives in democracies. With financial and technical assistance from the United Nations Development Programme and Commonwealth Secretariat, the Task Group travelled in teams of 2-3 members to 19 countries. During these visits, we also met with South African missions to discuss the ways in which South Africa was projecting its image.⁵ We subsequently met twice with the Department of Foreign Affairs to discuss these findings.⁶

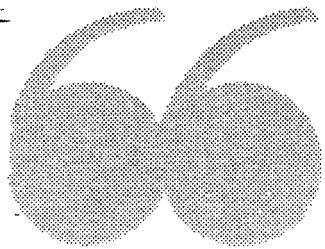
1.5 THE PROCESS

The process has been as inclusive as we could make it: every sector of society has been contacted. In total we have met with about 1,000 individuals. The quality and thoughtfulness of input has been impressive. We would like to thank all contributors for the time and commitment they have given to this process.

This work has been a real learning experience. South Africans have never had the opportunity to consider how their government should communicate. There has never been such a review - at least in public - nor such transparency in the discussion of budgets, personnel and structures. Institutions have never before been consulted nor involved in discussing how these issues can be approached in the interests of the whole community. The overall picture has never been painted, nor has South Africa been contrasted with the best systems other democracies have developed.

We are grateful to have been given the opportunity to do all these things. We hope the recommendations and analysis contained in the report will assist you in reshaping South Africa's Government communications into the next millenium.

2 See Annexure 1.
3 See Annexure 2.
4 See Annexure 3.
5 See Annexure 4.
6 See Annexure 5.



CHAPTER

2:

The Context for Government Communications: Framework and Constraints

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In May 1994, the Government of National Unity ushered in a new spirit of freedom of expression. "Government in the sunshine" was embraced by an information-hungry society. Under National Party rule, a culture of secrecy, disinformation, and restrictions on press freedom had infused government thinking. Almost overnight, the introduction of constitutional guarantees in respect of freedom of the media and the public's right to information promises a new, open and accountable style of government.

With media restrictions during the past 45 years, there was limited exposure of government mismanagement and disinformation. This changed from April 1994, when government in all its shapes and forms was exposed to the full force of a free and independent media.

Although there has been some irritation and sensitivity by government in response to sometimes unfair and harsh stories in the media, the GNU has remained true to its constitutional commitment to freedom of expression, information and a free media.

Government has recognised freedom of expression as an entrenched tenet of our new democratic society, but it has done so within the context of a society with an inheritance of severe deprivation in regard to information and dialogue with government. It has also had to operate within an organisational culture and structural framework insufficiently geared to modern systems of communication and information delivery.

This is the environment in which the Task Group conducted its work. In doing so, it has sought at all times to act within the framework of current and related policy trends effected and envisaged by government. At the same time, it has drawn on the best and most appropriate international practice. The objective of the Task Group has been to address its terms of reference and to produce a set of policy and other proposals designed to cohere with broad government policy, and to do so within a political environment in which all of society is committed to addressing the legacy of the past.

2.2 THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 Constitutional Requirements

The first departure point is the constitutional requirement for freedom of information. This has been strengthened by the practice of the present government which has, in Parliament, in the civil service and in the political arena, worked hard to open up the channels of communication and transparency. The Constitution makes provision for freedom of expression and of the media and also for freedom and access to information and the only time this can be circumscribed is when the country is at war or in a state of serious internal turmoil. There are impressive safeguards within the Constitution to ensure that these limitations are applied only as a last resort. The Constitutional Court has been established to protect these rights and has already demonstrated its ability to act firmly in defence of the Constitution. In addition, there are important new instruments which guarantee public accountability, such as the Public Protector, the Independent Broadcasting Authority and the planned Open Democracy Act (ODA) which supplement existing institutions such as the auditor-general's office..

At the highest level, the ODA will give practical effect to the provisions of the Constitution, by placing the final "brick in the wall" of transparent government. At the same time, it is clear that the issue of government communication and information needs to be addressed at more basic levels to ensure that key government information reaches the people as a whole.

2.2.2 Culture of Accountability and the Right to Know

The right to know is also an important part of the commitment to the policy of unearthing the political crimes of the past. The Act which established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has seen the birth of an extraordinary process. The TRC has provided genuine avenues for reconciliation for all those who were involved in the political and military struggle which occurred in South Africa in the second half of the 20th Century. At the same time, it has entrenched the principle of knowledge and openness as essential requirements for the functioning of a democratic society, and fostering a culture of accountability.

2.2.3 Leaner Administration

A third policy context is the government's commitment to a streamlined, efficient and transparent public service. This policy is beginning to be reflected in the new style of budgetary management by the Treasury. Zero-based budgeting allows for new criteria to be entered into the budgeting process and includes multi-year planning, as opposed to the incremental budgeting system we have at present - essentially a bargaining exercise in which the allocation made in the previous year has an inordinate weight in determining current allocations. The new model will require departments of state to comply with stated objectives, resulting in a performance and objectives-linked allocation of funding to the different ministries and departments of state.

Our review of government communications has, therefore, been conducted with a view to setting management by objectives, as well as towards leaner and more efficient structures. This is practically expressed in the need carefully to consider outsourcing and the creation of a highly professional and well-trained corps of communicators.

2.2.4 Co-ordination within government

Another important policy strand relates to the recognition of the interdependence of government departments and the carefully conceived balance between its three tiers. The policy and practice of the new government needs to recognise the importance of the communication and information function within every department of state and within all

three tiers of government. This policy has informed our approach to the question of how and where the communication function should relate to, and co-ordinate with, the structures of democratic government.

2.2.5 Affirmative Action & Empowerment

Another crucial policy framework relates to the implementation of affirmative action for all groups disadvantaged by apartheid. In communications, this requires examination at three levels: the communicator, the producer of materials and information, and the public audience.

Throughout our report, we have taken into account the commitment of the GNU to the empowerment of historically disadvantaged communities. It is now generally accepted that such communities in South Africa include blacks, women, disabled persons and people living in rural areas. The principle of empowerment includes affirmative action for such historically and currently disadvantaged communities.⁷ These principles affect a range of issues from media diversity and control, to training and capacity building, the development of communication networks, and outsourcing.

2.2.6 Ownership & Control of the Media

Concentration of ownership and control is a matter of concern for all governments. In the case of the media, there is an additional concern: lack of diversity allows for control of information and opinion. Media diversity is thus vital to democracy.

In addition to urging that this matter be dealt with by recommending that issues of monopoly be considered as part of competition policy and that distribution networks should become common carriers, we have approached our work from the perspective that government should assist the development of a plurality of voices, and encourage media diversity. This goal can be advanced in a variety of ways other than through competitions policy per se. Examples include affirmative action strategies, support for community media and the public broadcaster administered through an independent body, and more transparent criteria for selecting and awarding contracts, in order to promote empowerment.

We have approached the problem of foreign ownership of the media from the point of view that forcing unbundling into South African hands could result in the closing of titles and thus a reduction in media diversity because of the cross-media subsidisation and shared resource policies adopted by the groups. Instead our approach has been to bring pressure on foreign owners to expand ownership structures to include more South African interests.

2.3 CURRENT CONSTRAINTS

Throughout our consultation and research, we have been struck by the significant constraints upon government in the field of information and communication. Although we are firmly of the belief that, given government policy objectives, many of these constraints will ease and indeed disappear in the longer term, they form the backdrop against which we worked.

2.3.1 Cultural Background

The first major constraint is the difference in culture between the old administration and the new. This expresses itself most graphically between the ministries which often have

7 We believe that a set of 'qualifiers' should be developed as a framework for affirmative action. This policy should be developed within the context of acknowledging and attempting to address issues of redressing the inequality of disadvantaged groups including blacks, women, old people, people with disabilities, people who cannot read or write, people living in rural and remote areas. Additional qualifiers would include the need to develop the small and medium enterprise sector, empower business in disadvantaged sectors and so on.

completely different attitudes to communication and information to those of departments. We have, indeed, seen little evidence of effective co-operation between ministerial liaison officers and departmental communicators, although there are exceptions. We have also noted that, because of the way communications is structured, ministers have little direct involvement in the broad communication functions (beyond media liaison) of their departments. Yet the political role of ministers requires them to be in the forefront and taking responsibility for explaining, motivating and defending government policy: this is where communications capacity should be located.

Related to this problem is a style of administration which is steeply hierarchical and strangled by red tape, with long reporting lines and top-heavy management. This is particularly unsuited to efficient communications delivery which requires creative space, speed and flexibility.

It is generally clear that government at all three levels has committed itself to a new policy which recognises its rights and obligations to provide information about its operations, plans and projects. Some ministries, departments, provincial authorities and local authorities are better at this than others. Thus, although in general we detected an underlying commitment to the policy of providing information and communicating with the public and stakeholders, delivery is uneven, generally inadequate and still impeded by an inability completely to shrug off a culture of secrecy.

2.3.2 Low Status of Communications

The status of communications and its practitioners is also an inhibiting factor. There is poor recognition of the need for a professional government communication and information service in South Africa. Rather, there are disparate communication and information officials with widely varying backgrounds, seniority and training. In order to eliminate this constraint, we believe that the status of the profession within government needs to be raised.

Related to the above is what we perceive to be a poor understanding of the role of communications and its function in government. This, it must be said, is a fault discernible both in the old administration and the new. It is reflected in the nature of appointments made and, as noted above, in the status and training of communications professionals.

In addition, although those who hail from the liberation movements have been exposed to a strong consultative approach which was effected through alternative methods of communication and information delivery, this style of public consultation has not yet been incorporated into the thinking and practice of the new government.

2.3.3 Lack of Communication and Information Policy

There is no clear policy in relation to government communication and information in South Africa. It is hoped our report will go some way towards assisting in the establishment of such a policy. The lack of policy in this area puts South Africa out of step with many countries in the developing world which recognise that one of the key requirements for government is to develop and maintain a dynamic and effective information and communication strategy.

The new government has not been able to forge a national information policy. Although the RDP office initiated a study on national information policy more than a year ago, from which some valuable reports have emanated, it appears to have made insufficient progress. At the level of pure information policy, government needs to conclude the process that was commenced in the RDP office, and adopt uniform standards for information storage and dissemination.

A strong government communication and information service can coexist with a culture

that embraces freedom of expression and information. The recommendations contained in our report will, we believe, go a long way towards providing for a productive coexistence of these two essential components of a democratic society. The information society is about the right to know and choose. It is also the driving engine for economies into the next millennium.

2.3.4 Patterns of Ownership and Control

South African democracy inherited a concentrated media. Over the past two years this has been mitigated by the development, for the first time, of a true national public broadcaster, by the recent empowerment takeovers, and by the continuing efforts of the community media sector. As already stated, concentration of media ownership is a danger in democracy. It raises the likelihood that opinion and information may be controlled by one sector of society to the disadvantage of others. For this reason, we believe a greater diversity of media in South Africa would improve the quality and range of information flow generally, and facilitate effective government communication and information.

2.3.5 Media Professionalism

The apartheid years also damaged the profession of journalism. Attrition drove many talented journalists out of the profession or out of the country. It impoverished standards. We have, in this regard, identified a relative lack of professionalism in South African media. Like media professionals in government, extensive training and retraining is required if this constraint is to be eliminated. In this regard, too, we make certain observations about the performance of the press which we hope may have some influence on the direction in which the media restructures itself.

2.3.6 Relationships between Press and Government

An uneasy relationship exists between press and government. On the one hand, government complains that its message, its perspectives and its concrete decisions and actions do not receive adequate media coverage. Reports are often superficial, incomplete and distorted. Important government communication is often selectively ignored.

On the other hand, the media alleges that the government's communication efforts are too often incomplete, opaque, and superficial, and that the way in which the government releases its news is unprofessional. There are too many delays in news releases and an unwillingness or clumsiness in providing in-depth and background information on government decisions and policy.

Both points of view can be substantiated and have some merit. In private, we found leaders in both the media and government willing to accept the shortcomings of their own institutions quite readily. The consistent repression of the truth by the previous government in South Africa and the subsequent entrenchment of freedom of information and expression in our Constitution has resulted in a media which, quite correctly, guards its newly won freedoms jealously. But, while we believe tension between government and the press is healthy, and indeed inevitable, there is scope for both sides to listen to the other's critiques and for joint efforts to improve respective standards.

2.3.7 Obsolete Legislation

Restrictive laws still exist under which the media operate and which obstruct its efforts. These need to be removed from the statute book. They are anachronistic and need to be repealed in a systematic way.⁸

2.3.8 Inadequate Infrastructure

We note a critical problem which severely constrains the capacity of government to inform the population: inadequate communications infrastructure. This reveals itself in our telecommunications systems, our broadcasting infrastructure and the poverty of our information technology. The result is the extreme isolation experienced by communities disadvantaged by remoteness, illiteracy, poverty and social circumstance. Addressing this problem - literally, bringing the benefits of an information society to the majority of South Africans - will require the mobilisation of capital and skills beyond the means of the government. New partnerships with the private sector, as well as the necessary legislation and public policy to enable this, are urgently needed to provide telephone lines, communication technologies and delivery capacity.

2.3.9 Communications and the Role of government

The final problem relates to budget and resources. The public budget is under severe pressure with many demands placed upon it. The development of a more effective government communication system will have to be financed in part from savings and reduction of waste and duplication. Other resources can be obtained by more effective partnerships with communities, the private sector and better working methods between levels of government.

However, it is abundantly clear that many poor and rural people - the majority - lack access to information about national developments. This is partly because the infrastructure is not available, nor the funding in place, to produce the necessary material. It is unlikely that private sector or community resources can generate the funds needed to fill all these gaps. The public broadcaster and the community media sector will need support from the national purse if these gaps are to be filled in the short to medium term. The alternative will be an information community which includes only those who can afford it.

CHAPTER

3:

The Current Picture: Government Communications in 1996

3.1 A QUANTITATIVE PICTURE

To determine the size and character of government communications budgets and structures, a questionnaire was sent to all ministerial and departmental liaison officers, as well as to provinces.⁹ SACS provided a detailed breakdown of its establishment and operations, and directors general provided their budget figures.¹⁰

The responses were compiled and assessed by the Development Bank of South Africa.¹¹

Overall, information was obtained from all departments and provinces and from all but three ministries. All data is for the current year, except population figures.

We had serious difficulty in compiling authoritative data from which benchmarks could be set, and useful comparative data drawn up. For example, the figures for advertising costs by department are not separately counted and we have, therefore, used the industry estimate of R150 million a year. The definition of what constitutes "communications" is also not transparent - for example, the SACS shows its communication costs for salaries, not for operations. In most provinces, we have only been able to obtain figures for central communications but not for individual departments.

These difficulties themselves underline the need for explicit and consistent budgeting criteria against which costs and output can be measured. The following statistics should be considered the best estimate we could develop given these constraints.

3.2 STAFFING

- There are a total of 1095 positions for the communication/liaison functions within national government. Of these the majority (55%) are in SACS, with 2,5% in ministries and the balance in departments (42,5%). In the case of SACS, many of these positions are not filled.
- In addition, provinces employ 406 personnel in central communication and liaison functions.
- The total number of personnel employed in these functions at both levels of government is 1501.

⁹ See Annexure 1.

¹⁰ Neither are included as annexures. The SACS information is bulky and was found to be impossible to analyse in the state presented. A more coherent, though more superficial breakdown was obtained through their annual report. Information from the departments is available though not annexed to this report.

¹¹ Annexure 7.

We have not been able to assess the numbers of people involved in the communications function at local level. These functions are carried out in a variety of ways — by departments in the larger cities and by officials who perform this function as part of a range of other duties.

3.3 BUDGETS

3.3.1 Estimating the budget is particularly difficult. Based on the material submitted, the current total for communications expenditure at national level, including staffing, operations and advertising is R294,5m and, through provinces, an additional R85,98m, making a combined total of R380,48m.

This represents an average of 0,31% of total government spending. Based on these figures, national government is spending about R7,2 per capita and provincial government R2,1 per capita - less than R10 per citizen each year.

The data has provided some interesting material on the breakdown of costs between staffing and operations. For example, SACS spends the highest proportion of its communication budget on staffing costs - over 62%. This is lower at other branches of government: departments spend 14% on staffing, ministries 42%, and provinces 22%.

Within the national departments, priorities vary markedly. The top five spending ratios on communication staffing and operations, apart from SACS, are:

Public Service Ministry	17,05%
DP de Klerk	16,77%
Ministerial Offices	15,41%
President	12,38%
DP Mbeki	12,23%

The majority of departments are spending below 0,2% of their total budgets on communications. (Further details in Annex 23)

3.3.2 Provincial government annual expenditures on central communications personnel and operations vary widely. Provinces provide the major part of the infrastructure, but SACS contributes to this. SACS allocations take into account the relative levels of spending by provincial governments. For example, the highest level of service provision by SACS is to the lowest provided province, and vice-versa.

3.3.3 A calculation of combined expenditure on staff and operations in each province, however, shows the wide discrepancy in service delivery, with very low per capita levels in two provinces with large rural populations:

North West	R7,97
Mpumalanga	R4,21
Gauteng	R2,22
Northern	R2,05
Western Cape	R1,97
Free State	R1,73
Northern Cape	R1,43
Kwazulu-Natal	R1,04
Eastern Cape	R ,87

3.3.4 Local government structures, although approached, failed to produce figures on personnel and budgets.

3.4 A QUALITATIVE PICTURE

In addition to the questionnaires, Comtask approached communications personnel at all levels of the public service. The following is a summary of the position we identified.

3.4.1 Ministries¹²

Ministers are structurally disempowered in the communications sphere. In most cases, they are entitled to one media liaison officer who is available on secondment from the department. Where ministers have appointed media liaison officers separately, these personnel are also subjected to civil service procedures with regard to salaries and conditions of service - seldom relating to their real skills or experience in the field. Where ministerial media liaison officers are seconded from the departments, these personnel may be plucked from the structures regardless of their communications skills or their sympathy with and understanding of the policies and persuasion of the Minister.

Operational budgets are generally held by the departments which maintain media sections of varying sizes. Of 23 respondent ministries, only three indicated that there was a specific communication budget. Most ministerial liaison officers reported that they used departmental budgets for their function.

Because the head of communications is generally based in the department and reports to the director general, both minister and the media liaison officer (who occupies a lower rank than the senior departmental official) often lack the means to change the course or style of communications.

As a result of these structural arrangements, a number of the new ministerial communications staff have already left the service. Salaries are uneven and there is tension between some ministries and departmental media sections.

Because of inappropriate skills in departmental media sections or lack of cooperation, ministerial liaison officers are also often seriously overworked. There are problems of co-ordination between MLOs and departmental staff. Some MLOs receive little or no back-up as they have no staff or assistance of their own. Lack of training and skills sometimes results in poor performance, particularly as regards what are presently seen as prime functions, like media liaison, although there are cases in which the work is excellent.

Despite these findings, there was a majority view among practitioners in ministries, departments and the provinces that the separation between departmental and ministerial functions be maintained, with 57%-64% in favour of separation.

3.4.2 Departments¹³

There is no clear standard for setting budget levels or defining the functions of the communications personnel. The line reporting structure, combined with a tradition of rigid control of information, severely hampers creativity and responsiveness of communications professionals. In most departments, a communications post is a stage in a career. A communicator in the Department of Justice, for example, may be a magistrate or legal officer by profession.

Departmental officials ranked lack of human resources and finance as major concerns, with lack of clear policy and verifiable information next. Lack of media access and responsiveness were ranked as the lowest concern.

12 Annexure 8.

13 Annexure 9.

3.4.3 Provinces¹⁴

Four provincial administrations maintained a separate communications function for the Premier; two did not. The remaining provincial administrations reported that there was one communication function for the provincial government. 57% were in favour of continued separation between Premier and provincial administration.

3.4.4 SACS¹⁵

The head of SACS set out the organisations current dilemma in his presentation to Comtask: SACS lacks a clear mandate. As such it has carried on with the basic structure inherited from the previous government without a clear basis on which to restructure or reform itself. In the course of our work, SACS appeared as a collection of undirected components. In its presentation to us, the Project Planning Unit agreed that no integrated campaign planning advice is offered to departments.

SACS also suffer from low morale and a large number of its senior personnel have applied for retrenchment packages. A majority of the senior staff who made presentations to Comtask were already in this position. By July, low morale among staff and insecurity about the future of the organisation had led to some 111 staff opting for the retrenchment package offered to civil servants. By October, this figure had risen to 160.

The data in the questionnaire indicates a lack of strong interaction with departments and provinces. Although SACS has more than half the entire communications personnel of the national government, it has a low level of interaction with government departments, ministries and provinces. Two-thirds of departments, ministries and provinces had contact "from time to time" and a further 17% "not often". One result of this is a significant duplication of services throughout government. For example, news cutting and analysis is often duplicated by SACS, the department and the ministry because of lack of agreement on the required product. The most common service used is for media releases and publications, such as the year book, and for the annual parliamentary briefing sessions.

The cost of SACS products as provided to departments generally ignores the labour, equipment and overhead costs.

The presentations made to Comtask bear out the results of the questionnaire and the lack of enthusiasm for SACS and its low credibility in government and the media. There is no single reason for this, nor does the responsibility lie solely with SACS. There is an inherited prejudice in some quarters against SACS, based on its history. The lack of a clear set of communication structures and policies within Government also creates a vacuum within which it is difficult for an agency such as SACS to function effectively. At the same time, SACS has not been able to change its image fast enough, nor has it undertaken consultative research and needs identification. This might have earned it more "customers" within government, or a more creative relationship with civil society.

The problem is most acute in the provinces. According to the provincial communicators, SACS provincial offices operate with varying degrees of efficiency. The Provincial Government Communications Forum expressed serious concerns about SACS, and noted overlap and duplication which, it stated, was to the detriment of both parties.

Some SACS employees favoured the privatisation of certain components of SACS, though there were varying degrees of certainty as to whether these components could survive on the open market.

14 Annexure 10.

15 Annexure 11.

Notwithstanding the level of criticism of SACS, there is consensus among ministries, departments and provinces about the future priorities they attach to a central agency. 68% of ministries, 74% of departments and 57% of provinces were in favour of a centralised structure. However, each level qualified these statements with the following:

- the central structure should only provide defined services (such as media monitoring);
- it should be structured more firmly than at present;
- it should have no management authority over other bodies.
- In particular the provinces were unanimous that SACS regional structures should be discontinued and absorbed into provincial structures.

3.5 OTHER OBSERVATIONS

With regard to frustrations at work, all officials consulted shared the same concerns as their colleagues in other government structures. The top three frustrations were lack of financial resources (6 provinces), lack of a clear policy (4 provinces) and lack of human resources (4 provinces). The results for the other structures were:

- lack of human resources (departments 19/31, ministries 14/23);
- financial resources (departments 16/31, ministries 14/23);
- ministries complained of a lack of verified information and a lack of clear policy (6/23), as did departments (11/31);
- additional issues raised relate to low remuneration, rank and designation (and corresponding acknowledgement of professionalism) of MLOs.

3.6 SOME CONCLUSIONS

- 3.6.1 The level of resources applied to communications is too low, although we do not believe increased percentages per se are an answer to improved communications. The extreme variations in range of expenditures and the lack of a clear budget and accounting system underline the fact that government does not accord communications sufficient priority. There is no overall government standard for setting budgets or national strategies, nor are there mechanisms for measuring performance. As a consequence, widely differing priorities are given between different bodies.
- 3.6.2 There is a lack of central co-ordination. Although Cabinet has a Communications Sub-Committee, it does not meet frequently. Press conferences are conducted by the director general of the President's Office, and ministries are sometimes not involved, even where the information relates directly to their line functions. Also, despite the existence of a category in Cabinet memoranda regarding communications around particular pieces of legislation, this is either ignored or given the most cursory attention. Communicators are seldom asked for inputs.
- 3.6.3 Communication is not taken sufficiently seriously at a high enough level. Although the President's Office runs an efficient communication system, Cabinet does not. Many ministries give insufficient attention to the messages flowing from government, and personnel are not sufficiently empowered or resourced (or often even informed) to do this for them. Even where arrangements are made to create a post for a communications professional, this may be filled by people with other skills. Communications thus remains

"the Cinderella", and government is substantially impoverished by its own inability to take this crucial aspect of governance seriously.

3.6.4 There is no co-ordination of messages between government departments. Advertising campaigns are individually launched, press conferences may clash with one another; sometimes contradictory messages go out. The annual parliamentary press briefing has no centrally defined message. The plethora of corporate images on letterheads also illustrates this point.

3.6.5 There is also a lack of co-ordination of messages on one central issue within a department. Rather than operating on a campaign basis, and making all means of communication (advertising, press, public relations, public events, internal communications, design work, etc) work together to convey and reinforce the message, production is often ad hoc and there is no corporate follow through.

3.7 THE MMP SURVEY OF GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS¹⁶

Comtask commissioned the MMP to monitor a selection of national, regional and local media, including television, radio and newspapers in as broad a range of languages and geographic areas as possible. It was noted that there are a small number of African language newspapers. Current affairs programmes were excluded.

Each item was measured in terms of length and content. Qualitative analysis was measured as positive, negative or neutral. It was noted that news has a commodity value and has to be popular. Thus positive and negative emphasis is determined according to key elements: recency, repetition, placement, use of headlines, language or application of metaphor, depiction of role players and representation. This has an impact on the positive or negative nature of news items.

The methodology utilised by the MMP is recognised internationally and was employed during the 1994 election by the independent Media Commission. The classification of coverage into three broad categories - positive, negative and neutral - does represent a judgement on the part of the MMP utilising this methodology, and is necessarily general. These findings are useful in that they give a broad overview of coverage, and allow comparisons between different media and departments. They do not prove one way or the other that the media is "fair" or "unfair" to government, but give some indication of the way in which different media treat the same material. We have not, in any case, founded any major conclusions on these quantitative results. The MMP survey also provided useful qualitative findings based on interviews with media and government personnel.

3.7.1 What the survey found

News coverage

- The majority of news about government is 'neutral' (49%). 'Positive' news scored 30% and 'negative' 21%.
- The President's Office scored highest. This was seen as being due to the news value of the President's Office and also to its excellent media liaison personnel.
- Media coverage generally favoured transformation stories when not focussed on scandals.
- The Constitutional Assembly was the most successful single media event. This was due to the nature of the negotiations, ready access to players and excellent media liaison.

- Foreign Affairs coverage was 'negative', partly due to unsophisticated media analysis and a North American bias.
- SACS estimates that 90% of government reports are channelled via the parliamentary press gallery. They also established that the mainstream press is well served in terms of access.
- Media correspondents do not see SACS as a primary source. They see face-to-face sourcing as more important and valuable.
- Alternative and community media suffer because of a lack of face-to-face sourcing. They are isolated and not well served.
- Most significantly 80% of government information generated never reaches the public via the media.

Influences on media coverage

There was a convergence of opinion from both media and government communicators that the following factors influence media coverage:

- openness and interactivity of relationships, both formal and informal, between media and government communicators;
- the way information is packaged and customised;
- awareness of constraints faced by media practitioners;
- comprehensive media strategies (management, timing);
- expertise and inside knowledge by government communicators.

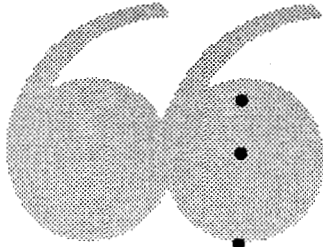
Structural Problems

Structural problems identified by government communicators include:

- Poor relations between departments and ministries. The ministerial liaison function is often subordinate in rank to departmental communicators resulting in poor support from departments and a resulting lack of responsiveness to enquiries;
- Poor co-ordination between ministries. There is a need for corporate identity and liaison over central messages;
- MLOs in ministries have too wide a range of responsibilities.

Breakdown of Coverage

- TV coverage was generally 'positive'. Some problems with translation have been identified. Radio enjoys a broader, more diverse audience. Coverage is mostly 'positive', but a lack of live sources has been identified. 702 was the only independent station and was more 'negative', but 'positive' coverage still outweighed the 'negative'.
- Afrikaans newspapers demonstrated a shift away from National Party support to Afrikaner centred issues: language, education and the economy. Except for Rapport, the Afrikaans print media was not overwhelmingly 'negative'.
- English newspapers provided substantial coverage. This was especially true of the Citizen, whose coverage was mainly derived from SAPA reports.
- Daily papers in Gauteng and the Western Cape featured equal amounts of coverage. There was less in other regions, demonstrating that distance from the action may be a factor in coverage.



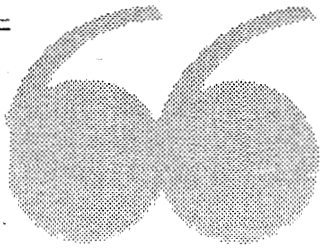
- The most 'positive' paper was the Sowetan.
- Longer deadlines and more analytical reporting styles made national weeklies the most critical.
- Regional and local weeklies are less substantial in their coverage.
- SAPA was seen as predominantly 'neutral'. However it was considered to be fairly conservative in news gathering because of costs and under-resourcing. SAPA believes it could operate better if government was better organised.

Main Problems: Media

- lack of separation in the perception of government vs political party role players;
- structural separation between political correspondents and beat reporters;
- under staffing and under-resourcing in media;
- poor news flow from and to regions;
- alternative and community press suffer from lack of information.

Main Problems: Government

- Media communication not taken sufficiently seriously;
- Structural changes needed for better delivery.



CHAPTER

4:

The South African Media Environment

INTRODUCTION

The Task Group was directed to make recommendations in respect of how to improve government communications in an environment in which freedom of expression is evolving. The first principle that we have applied is that all our recommendations should involve the enhancement of freedom of expression, and that this fundamental constitutional guarantee should be nurtured.

We have, however identified five key areas which retard the free flow of information and in respect of which we will be making recommendations:

4.1 OWNERSHIP, DISTRIBUTION AND CONTROL OF THE MEDIA

At the time that the Task Group was appointed by the Deputy President, in January 1996, the South African media environment was characterised by a higher degree of concentration of ownership and control. The Task Group commissioned expert studies by Robin McGregor¹⁷, editor of "Who Owns Whom", to investigate the extent of such concentration in the print sector. McGregor's findings confirmed the following:-

- there had for many years been a duopoly in respect of the English and Afrikaans print media markets represented by Nationale Pers/Perskor on the one hand and TML/Argus on the other;
- the duopoly had been vertically integrated at the level of print, distribution and product;
- restrictive practices existed within the sector ensuring that distribution and to some extent printing had been contained within the duopoly;
- the duopoly was effectively the major shareholder in the only commercial pay - television station in South Africa, M-Net;
- the controllers of the duopoly had become sensitive to the pressure upon them to reduce the level of concentration of ownership within the commercial media sector;
- as a result, Anglo American (which had owned both Argus & TML) had sold its stake in the Argus group to the Irish-based Independent Group, a newspaper and publishing empire headed by Tony O'Reilly.

4.1.1 Indeed, as the year unfolded, and the Task Group researched the field, it became clear that two takeovers by black empowerment groups would further break up the duopoly. At the time of compiling this report, it would appear that Kagiso Trust Investments will obtain joint control of Perskor, a major player in the Afrikaans element of the duopoly, and that the National Empowerment Consortium (NEC), comprising a host of black empowerment organisations led by New Africa Investments Limited (NAIL), Worldwide African Investment Holdings (Pty) Ltd (WAIH), National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and South African Railways & Harbours Workers' Union (SARHWU), would purchase a portion of the Anglo American stake in Johnnic, thereby giving the NEC a significant stake, and probably ultimate control, of the remaining large element in the English newspaper market, Times Media Limited. In addition, TML hived off its Eastern Cape interest into a separate company with a large black empowerment element and Nasionale Pers began divesting itself of City Press into a 51% Black owned group. It has therefore become clear that, both in the print sector and the existing commercial pay-television sector, the high degree of concentration of ownership has been extensively diluted in favour of foreign and black empowerment interests.

The rapidity with which these deals have occurred in a short space of time indicates that the factors that favoured the monopolistic ownership of the media under apartheid South Africa are diminishing. There is continuing pressure for a diversity of ownership in the media sector, and the Task Group is aware of a number of further deals in the pipeline that will continue to dilute the high level of concentration of ownership in the sector.

- 4.1.2 Moreover, the introduction of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), under the IBA Act, No 153 of 1993, has resulted in the regulation of control and ownership of broadcasting services, and contains specific anti-monopoly provisions, inter alia, limiting control of television stations, radio stations and introducing cross-media provisions. In a nutshell, no single person or entity may control more than one television station, two non-overlapping FM radio stations and two non-overlapping medium wave radio stations. Furthermore, any person who controls more than 20% of newspaper circulation in any particular licence area may not hold 15% or more of the equity in a broadcasting service in that licence area, by virtue of the cross-media regulations instituted by the IBA through its Triple Inquiry Report adopted by the National Assembly in early 1996.
- 4.1.3 In terms of the Triple Inquiry Report, it was further recommended by the IBA that the SABC convert itself into a national public broadcaster, and that its regional radio services be sold in accordance with IBA licence criteria. As the Task Group is reporting, the sale of the 6 regional radio stations namely Highveld in Johannesburg, Jacaranda based in Pretoria, East Coast Radio in Kwa-Zulu Natal, KFM in the Western Cape, Oranje based in Bloemfontein and Algoa in East London has almost been completed. The process has seen independent black empowerment groups teaming up with new and existing media groups in compliance with the limitations on ownership and control, ensuring a new diversity of voices in regional commercial radio across the country.
- 4.1.4 The SABC itself is in the process of converting itself, in accordance with the recommendations of the Triple Inquiry Report, into a national public broadcasting service (NPBS). At present there is an NPBS Bill before the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Communications. Once adopted, the statutory mission of the NPBS will be defined in public broadcasting terms, rather than those of the existing Broadcasting Act, which allowed the SABC to operate, under apartheid, as a government broadcaster.
- 4.1.5 Moreover, over the past 2 years since its institution, the IBA has licensed more than 80 community radio stations, generally operating off low-powered transmitters in disadvantaged black areas in South Africa. The community radio sector has become a

vibrant one, although it is fraught with problems relating to long-term sustainability and viability, issues which are addressed below and elsewhere in this report.

4.1.6 In the print media sector, there remain strong elements of the legacy of monopolistic control, particularly in the area of distribution and printing. The dominant distributor of English print media in the mass-market is Allied Publishing, controlled by the Independent and TML groups, and there are similar arrangements in the Afrikaans print media sector. Entry level hurdles for prospective media owners in this sector are characterised by distribution fees which are generally in the area of 40 - 50% of cover price demanded by these distribution monopolies. We had representations from regional players indicating that, aside from independent knock-and-drop operations and the Caxtons' local distribution system, there is very little choice for the newspaper or magazine proprietor but to go in with the distribution monopolies. On an even more local level, we heard submissions in the provinces to the effect that the Caxtons' regional distribution system of knock-and-drop in itself constituted a monopoly in that sector, and that if regional newspapers in the non-metropolitan areas did not go in with Caxtons, they faced an uphill battle to enter the market. It was made apparent that the costs of setting up a distribution system, except in an extremely limited area, are excessive.

The pattern that emerges in the survey of ownership and control of the print media sector is one which is repeated in many other sectors of the South African economy. A high degree of concentration of ownership and control is beginning to be challenged by the forces of foreign investment and black empowerment. But, these forces are not strong enough, nor sufficiently directed, to alter entrenched anti-competitive and restrictive practices in the industry, and it is our submission that the appropriate authority should address these practices as a matter of urgency. The Task Group is of the view that ownership and control of the print media should continue to be broadened in a number of respects, so as to reflect the demographics of South African society. The breaking down of barriers in respect of the national and international media market has had a strong effect upon the concentration of media ownership in the print media sector, but to achieve a more rapid introduction of a competitive market in this sector, it would be necessary for newspaper ownership to be tested against revamped competitions policy in South Africa. This policy will be presented by the Minister of Trade & Industry to the National Economic and Development Labour Advisory Council (NEDLAC) in the form of a discussion paper in the coming few months. In the interim, we believe that the anti-competitive and restrictive practices that occur in the distribution sphere should be transformed into an operation conducted on a common carrier basis.¹⁸

At the Caledon Colloquium in October 1996, both the representatives of Nasionale Pers and Allied Publishing indicated that they would welcome the breaking down of the newspaper distribution monopoly in South Africa. It was felt that there was a need for regulations requiring the mass distributors of newspapers to be obligated in law with common carrier provisions, much along the lines of newspaper distributors in the UK. Accordingly, we make recommendations in this report setting out the framework of regulations that would impose common carrier status upon the mass newspaper distribution systems in South Africa. This would enable smaller and emerging newspapers to be dealt with fairly and equitably by these distributors. The regulations would undoubtedly involve tariff provisions which should be established in consultation with the Department of Trade & Industry.

18 See Recommendation 82. In this regard see also Annexure 18 and Recommendation 81.

4.2 FUNDING AND RESOURCES FOR THE NATIONAL PUBLIC BROADCASTER

Whereas the SABC under Nationalist Party Rule, was essentially a Government Broadcaster, the IBA Act envisages its transformation into an NPBS. The Triple Enquiry Report of the IBA made it clear that in order to establish the three tier system of broadcasting, namely public, community, and private, which the IBA Act provided for, a strong NPBS needed to be funded and subsidised. The IBA Report and the National Assembly Minute state as follows:

"Parliament should provide funding on a triennial basis for:

- i) the cost of provincial split-time on radio stations;
- ii) the cost of increasing African language of local content television programming on the SABC;
- iii) the cost of funding the Education Ministry / SABC Task Recommendations on Educational Broadcasting"

In the same Report, it was accepted by Parliament that "selling off the six stations (the regional commercial stations) as soon as possible is the best financial option for the SABC". It was envisaged by the IBA, as endorsed by the National Assembly, that the proceeds of the sale of the radio stations would go some way towards dealing with the funding of a strong NPBS. The establishment of an NPBS is critical to the establishment of a wider productive and competitive broadcasting industry, with all its attendant benefits for the development of the country in the future. The essential policy goal of a diversity of voices is not only related to freedom of expression, but also to the establishment of a healthy broadcasting industry that will contribute to the prosperity of the country and the development of a South African identity of culture.

In this new three tier system of broadcasting, although there would obviously be an overlapping of roles between the three sectors, each sector would have an essential core competence. The NPBS' core competence would be in the field of public service, and public service includes the communication of government policies and programmes in fields of essential public service such as education, health and public works.

In the difficult process of transformation that the SABC is going through, we have detected a desire on its part to fulfil this core need. Indeed, the SABC went ahead with the recommendations of the Triple Enquiry Report, and sold off the six radio stations, in the belief that the benefits would be passed on to the NPBS. It now appears, however, that the proceeds from the sales of the stations will not be passed on to the SABC, and that they will be paid directly into the Central Revenue Fund. This has created a disjuncture between financing and policy in respect of the public broadcasting service, which cannot bode well for public broadcasting in the future.

The fact that the proceeds of the sale are being paid into the Central Revenue Fund does not mean that funds that have been generated in this way cannot be attributed to the public service functions of the SABC. The Task Group feels that the resolution of Parliament to provide funding on a triennial basis for these public service broadcasting functions should be followed through. It is encouraging to note that the IBA will be sitting down with the SABC and government in an attempt to resolve the funding crisis that has emerged. What is needed is a mechanism that will ensure the proper functioning of the triennial budgeting process so as to eliminate crisis management in this area and promote the even development of public service broadcasting. In our recommendations, we suggest that the appropriate mechanism in the first instance would be the recommended Cabinet Committee to be headed by the Deputy President.¹⁹

4.3 LACK OF RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY AND INDEPENDENT MEDIA

4.3.1 The community and independent media sector suffered mixed fortunes during the transition period in South Africa. In the 1980s, there was a fairly vibrant alternative press with a number of titles, but it would appear that only the Weekly Mail and the New Nation, both weeklies, survived that period. Both of these titles have survived because of intervention from stronger publishing players. NAIL assumed ownership of the New Nation, and the Weekly Mail was renamed the Mail & Guardian, after Guardian Media, of London and Manchester, England, took a controlling stake.

On the other hand, the community media sector flourished in the 1990s. A number of factors have been found to be responsible for this development after hearing much testimony from players in this sector:

- 4.3.1.1 The formation of the National Community Media Forum (NCMF) which has facilitated a strong front of development-orientated community newspapers throughout South Africa, concentrating in the peri-urban and rural areas and incorporating a strong student press;
- 4.3.1.2 The recognition in the IBA Act of the need for community radio licences and the growth of more than 80 community radio stations. At least 40 of these stations can be characterised as stations specialising in developmental community news and information;
- 4.3.1.3 The development of the Independent Media Diversity Trust (IMDT) which, although presently under-financed, has provided massive support to community radio stations and community prints media since its inception in 1994. The IMDT receives the bulk of its funds from foreign donor governments and foreign non-governmental organisations, but has also received more than a million rands from the South African print media sector (Argus, TML and Nationale Pers).
- 4.3.1.4 The IMDT is seen by the NCMF and all the relevant stakeholders as the appropriate interim funding institution until a Media Development Agency (MDA) is recognised by government. We believe that such a body should be instituted by government, comprising independently elected trustees, that will operate a recognised subsidy system for community and independent newspapers in certain instances. As in the public broadcasting sector, we have found that although there are appropriate mechanisms for the funding of community media, there appears to be a need for a structured relationship between government, the donor community and the agency which administers the funds for community media. A plan needs to be developed by the three players in the interim, namely government, funding agencies and foreign governments, and the IMDT, that will ensure that the process of funding community media through an independent agency is strengthened and facilitated.²⁰

4.4 CENSORSHIP LEGISLATION ON THE STATUTE BOOKS

Notwithstanding the fact that groups such as the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI)²¹ and numerous other organisations have petitioned the government to scrap the remaining censorship laws, very little progress has been made with this task. The Government has undertaken over the years to attend to the list of statutes that needs to be repealed, and to introduce the appropriate scrapping legislation in Parliament. This has not been done. The effect of this is that certain legislation which fundamentally conflicts with the right of

20 See Annexure 12; see also Recommendations 78 & 79

21 See Annexure 6.

freedom of expression, not only remains on the Statute Books, but is, on occasion, selectively used by the authorities. A classic example of this is the abuse of Section 205 in respect of the PAGAD (People Against Gangsterism and Drugs) investigation in the Western Cape. Our finding is that antiquated censorship legislation should be scrapped from the statute books as a matter of urgency.

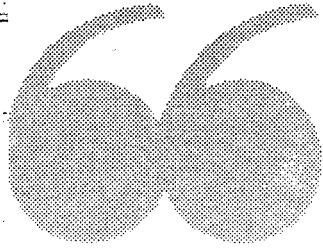
4.5 JOURNALISTIC STANDARDS IN SOUTH AFRICA

We have received submissions from experts in the field of journalism and media studies including Professor Guy Berger of Rhodes University in Grahamstown,²² and a submission from the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism which is run by Mr Allister Sparks.²³ It would appear that these and other experts who spoke to the Task Group believe that journalism in South Africa has been badly run down. Journalism appears to have become a depleted and somewhat demoralised profession. The little that was done to train black journalists and prepare them for advancement into positions of decision making authority placed enormous burdens on trained black journalists in the post 94-period. Many of the country's best black newspaper journalists were drawn into government jobs as well as senior managerial positions in the SABC and other media groups, in the period 1994 - 1996. The result is that newsrooms throughout the country are understaffed and juniorised. There are few reporters with more than three or four years experience. Only a handful are over the age of 30. This means that important assignments are being handled by inexperienced, over-worked and young reporters. The result is that there is an unacceptably high rate of misjudgment and error. Compounding the problem is a lack of experience and professionalism on the part of government media liaison staff. It is the Task Group's view that the situation will improve as more black graduates enter the profession, and as greater media diversity develops. Our recommendations in relation to a training function in the new government communication and information system, proposed by the Task Group, if adopted, will also contribute to the resolution of this problem.²⁴

22 See Annexure 14.

23 See Annexure 15.

24 See Recommendations, Personnel and Training.



CHAPTER 5: DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

"A society beginning to move from one epoch to another requires the development of an especially flexible, critical spirit. Lacking such a spirit, men cannot perceive the marked contradictions that occur in society as emerging values in search of affirmation and fulfilment clash with earlier values seeking self-preservation".

PAULO FREIRE

INTRODUCTION

- 5.1 The lack of a culture of free flowing information in South Africa is hindered by a number of factors. The print media does not reach the majority of the population. Communications infrastructure and public infrastructure has ignored many millions of the urban poor and rural masses. Information is both a right and an essential ingredient in economic development. Without an extension of access to information, South Africa will be unable to generate sustained growth to meet the developmental needs of its population. The development challenges are, therefore, many and varied.
- 5.2 The government should be a centre of excellence. It should embrace access to information by developing an across-the-board policy - through education, research, development, personal needs, decision-making needs and mass communications.
- 5.3 The language used for communication must be appropriate and simple. Providers of information will be required to have communications skills that meet the needs of the people in both rural and urban settings. This will enable the government to provide the disempowered with access to information in whatever form is relevant.²⁵
- 5.4 An efficient government information system should, in addition, make provision for a two-way system of communication. The development of the public service, and meeting the goals established for the reform of the public service to become open, transparent and accountable, is a general goal for all approaches to government information management. The people should be able to express their views to government and vice versa. This interactive means of information-sharing will enable the people to gain access to government information affecting all aspects of their daily lives.
- 5.5 The disadvantaged communities in rural and urban areas of the South African society should be the main targets for an enhanced development information system. Historically disadvantaged communities have been deprived of information related to their economies, education, cultures and societies. The beneficiaries of a developed information system, therefore, range from individuals to civil society.
- 5.6 The development challenges facing the GCIS in South Africa mean that a number of objectives need to be accomplished in a reasonably short period of time. Broad objectives could be listed as follows:
 - 5.6.1 determination of the information needs of clients;

- 5.6.2 development of the necessary communication and public infrastructure to deliver the information;
- 5.6.3 dissemination of this information in an appropriate and timely format;
- 5.6.4 promotion of innovative and non-traditional means of disseminating information that incorporates learning, teaching, management and services in addition to conventional approaches to make information useful to clients;
- 5.6.5 raising the awareness of the availability of government information to all South Africans in compliance with relevant legislation.

5.7 IMPORTANT FEATURES OF THE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION SYSTEM:

- 5.7.1 Implementation of the quickest, most cost-efficient means of disseminating development information in appropriate languages;
- 5.7.2 participation in innovative strategies of information-sharing for human development and playing a leading role in producing state-of-the-art development information;
- 5.7.3 establishment of directories of information resources available in government on all subjects, but with a special emphasis on development issues and nation-building;
- 5.7.4 utilisation of electronic devices wherever possible to enable people to make inquiries and retrieve information;
- 5.7.5 development of partnerships with designated Presidential Lead Projects to establish multi-purpose community centres (MPCCs) which disseminate useful information on government and other matters in a user-friendly manner to members of the community; and
- 5.7.6 acknowledgement that informal (indigenous) information plays a significant role in developing countries. A major development challenge is to harness this latent potential into a coherent contribution to the needs of the government communication service. Indigenous information is largely unstructured, very informal in extent and content, quite spontaneous and embedded in a cultural context.

The various components listed above illustrate the range of issues to be taken into account and are not supposed to be definitive.

5.8 NETWORKING

The overall system will need to take into account not only the government structures described above, but also the thousands of institutions involved: institutes attached to universities, the private sector, civil society, NGOs, CBOs, and international organisations.

Government communication needs to take into account the varied nature of development information. There is a need for a wide range of information services. The system can only meet needs through partnerships with others in the information industries to provide adequate supply and training to the population. Providers of information cannot cope with the often bewildering complexity of their environment.

Opportunities offered by new information technology must be identified and utilised. Caution must be exercised to avoid inappropriate technology and misleading technological solutions. An understanding of the problem, the possible solutions and the available technology is crucial.

Networking is an essential element of empowerment. This implies a building of information communication links to serve as early warning and support systems in librarianship and information work with the related professions. It is necessary to link individuals and professionals, users and other stakeholders notwithstanding professional and institutional differences.

Greater political awareness is also essential. Prevailing political, administrative and legal initiatives and the multiplicity of forums, policy documents, green or white papers and 'processes' in which the changing social context of libraries and information are addressed need to be monitored. The information and referral services should be capable of keeping all their clients informed through documents pertaining to these developments. Useful information on all social, political or economic activities should also be provided by information systems.

5.9 LINKAGES

5.9.1 Libraries²⁶

The public library system could be a focal point in information dissemination to the community. This system can provide facilities for the dissemination efforts of various ministries and agencies to inform and educate the general public as part of individual growth and development.

Modern public libraries could quite easily install community resource databases as the foundation of community information services, which help people to deal with government. In the USA, for example, many libraries assist their users in completing their income tax forms. Community resource databases, in addition to external and documented information sources, list information resources and expertise found in the community itself as an important factor in the empowerment of the community.

The library could provide access to databases giving access to government and private tenders and related documentation and can further assist members of the community who wish to tender for contracts.

Libraries of all types should be promoted as agencies of the government information and communication system and for the affirmation of South Africa's cultural diversity. By collecting and exhibiting or promoting materials in our various indigenous languages and reflecting our diverse cultures, libraries can contribute to increasing mutual understanding and tolerance.

Libraries in South Africa must be the subject of a 're-think'. There is a need, however, to extend the public library network into historically black areas. Underutilised public buildings could be used for this. Realignment and reconceptualisation of libraries should result in all the people of South Africa receiving this service. This implies adaptation in the selection and organisation of materials, opening hours and services, siting and accommodation of libraries. Libraries need to be realigned in relation to other organs of society such as community centres, schools and trade unions. The philosophical assumptions of school and community library work need to be reconsidered and many librarians need to be re-educated.

Opportunities are presented in the form of the recent development of resource centres, which can co-operate with each other.

26 Submissions were received from a number of libraries and other interested parties.

5.9.2 Multi-Purpose Community Centres²⁷

The Multi-Purpose Community Centre (MPCC) concept is known by various other names such as Multi-Purpose Information Centres (MPIC), Telekiosks, Multi-Purpose Telecentres (MPTC) and so on. The nomenclature used to describe the concept differs according to the perspective of the persons involved. The envisaged centres are designated for a multitude of different purposes relating to the community they are supposed to serve.

Multi-Purpose Community Centres (MPCCs) or Multi-Purpose Information Centres (MPICs) can be used as focal points for empowering historically disadvantaged communities in collecting, analysing and sharing information related to their developmental needs.

An MPCC/MPIC should be an open structure that invites existing institutions, organisations and agencies to network or form a clearinghouse for development information. The MPIC should be capable of providing developmental information, not as an end product, but as a means for growth and development. All members of the MPCC should be concerned with providing useful and accurate information to communities in an appropriate way. The most important aspects of MPCCs are that they should be user-oriented, adaptable to local conditions and designed to be accessible to the communities they serve. The dispersal of MPCCs in communities is crucial to their success.

There are a number of burning questions to answer before any MPCC moves from concept to reality. The caution here is that these answers should, by and large, be supplied by the 'clients', i.e. the community. In view of the wide diversity of organisations and viewpoints involved, meaningful co-ordination of the creation and establishment of MPCCs is most important.

In spite of all MPCCs having generic features, problems and solutions, each MPCC is unique to a specific community and as individual as a thumbprint.

5.9.3 Theatre

The use of street theatre and drama by existing local dramatists, buskers and other performers using mime and the local vernacular could be an effective communication tool in rural areas. Training of troupes in government communications could be implemented through workshops. This non-traditional form of communication could benefit the outreach programmes of government communications for those without access to electronic forms of media or information about their lives. This could harness indigenous talent and uses oral communication which is culturally acceptable.

5.9.4 Telecommunications: Expanding Capacity

There is universal recognition that an efficient and accessible telecommunications infrastructure is an essential prerequisite for government to accelerate social development and economic growth. Such an infrastructure permits the exchange and dissemination of vital information among citizens' educational, cultural, health, welfare and other institutions. Therefore, it is of critical importance that telecommunications infrastructure be pervasive.²⁸

5.9.4.1 It is also widely recognised that the Internet provides the capability to access national, international, local and regional information on countless subjects. In most cases, Internet access is readily available to universities, research institutions, business and private citizens in developed countries as well as in most urbanised areas of developing countries. There is, however, still a price attached to Internet access.

27 See Recommendation 65.

28 See Annexure 16.

5.9.4.2 A viable route would be to couple a pervasive broadband information/telecommunications infrastructure with country-wide Internet access. This would facilitate inter alia:

- Information Centres, One-Stop Information Shops or Multi-Purpose Community Centres (MPCCs) that can conceivably be deployed in rural and peri-urban areas, thus empowering remote communities to be part of the evolving global information society;
- universities, schools and communities to collaborate on a national, regional and international basis for the creation of appropriate local content. In this respect a model similar to the West African Griot concept where the traditional communities create 'multi-media' content is possible;
- the digitisation of museum pieces and other art treasures to make them available for viewing on Internet throughout the country;
- joint research by African scholars in the fields of development, history, culture and all research relevant to the continent;
- broad accessibility to a government on-line service.

5.9.4.3 The above applications and many others require a universal broadband telematic networking infrastructure. Telkom, while aware of this need, is focusing on the provision of basic telephones through its Vision 2000 project. The suggestion is, therefore, to supplement Telkom's activities in broadband infrastructure and Internet provision by approaching other service providers.

5.9.4.4 One means of extending this infrastructure is through the concept of the Community Information Delivery System (CIDS). This is a locally-developed and engineered technology focusing on networking infrastructure for delivery of content to remote sites by means of a low-cost, high bandwidth wireless network, which is rapidly deployable. It provides links between an information source and areas without fixed infrastructure. This technology is currently installed at several sites in the Pretoria area (Garsfontein, Lynwood, several schools and a community centre in Mamelodi and at a rural education centre east of Pretoria Ubuntu Centre).

5.9.5 The costs of developing this infrastructure runs into billions of rands. It is not within the scope of the Task Group's enquiry to cost such efforts. However, the need for an integrated programme co-ordinated within government to expand infrastructure is evident. Without this, whatever content or packages for information are developed, will continue to be accessible to a minority only.

5.9.6 The regulatory framework is critical.²⁹ Government lacks the skills, the technology and the finance to put this infrastructure in place. The private sector, in particular international finance and expertise, will be essential if the majority of South Africans are to become part of an information society.

5.10 CAPACITY BUILDING

The task of development cannot really be addressed until indigenous capabilities are established to access, acquire and utilise development information that has bearing on local information problems. A major trend in information resource management (IRM) is to facilitate access to stores of information otherwise unavailable. Government capacity-building initiatives should be developed and exploited to the fullest wherever possible in order to make the most efficient use of the limited resources available in South Africa.

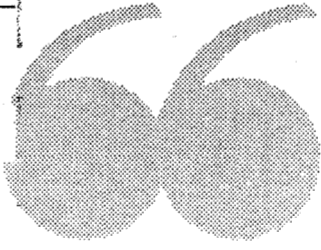
Training and capacity-building will provide insight into information systems. Such initiatives will afford the participants the opportunity to formalise plans for the

development of information-sharing networks between government and the existing information resources. Training will also investigate the properties and factors governing information flow as well as methods of processing information for optimum accessibility and utility.

5.11 TRAINING

The development of improved capacity and effective affirmative action across the board in the communication profession requires that new partnerships be established between the various role players. There is great potential for the government to initiate this process and involve the relevant schools of communication in the universities and technikons, specialised bodies such as the IBA, the SABC and the private sector. Both the PRISA and AAA, and a number of newspapers already funding training have indicated their willingness to join a collaborative effort with government.³⁰ In this way, government resources could be matched with the private sector. Programmes could be developed which assist the government and non-governmental sectors. If this is to happen, the funding stakeholders should be involved in the development and governance of such schemes. Special joint-funding arrangements should be established.

30 See especially AAA proposal, Annexure 13. See also Recommendation 58.



CHAPTER 6: International Perspectives: Communicating in a Democracy

6.1 INTRODUCTION

International communication trends in the latter quarter of the 20th Century have been influenced by a number of profound changes in the way governments interact with the population. These trends have been triggered by:

- the human rights debate - the principle that freedom of information and expression are necessary human rights;
- opportunities and global shrinkage created by the dramatic development of information and communication technology;
- a recognition of the role of information as an agent of empowerment;
- a growing consensus that governments should become more streamlined and cost-effective and that civil services should become smaller and more professional;
- The principle that "Government should do what government does best".
- a shift in the attitude of the press which became less reverent of the institutions of society and therefore less "useful" to governments;
- a critical focus on the controlling influence of whoever prepares the message and the visual and verbal language used to convey it.

6.2 INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICE

In view of the lack of a tradition of open government in South Africa, the Task Group made the identification of best practice in communications within the international community a priority. With financial support and advice from the United Nations and Commonwealth, the Group broke into teams of two or three and visited a wide range of countries. The policies and practices of 19 countries and four inter-governmental organisations were examined.³¹

The Task Group believes this experience provided a very important template of ideas and practices to discuss South African solutions. The following is a distillation of the main lessons learned.

³¹ The countries were: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Britain, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Ghana, Hungary, India, Israel, Malaysia, Senegal, Singapore, Tanzania, and the United States; and the Task Group consulted with the Commonwealth Secretariat, European Union, Organisation of African Unity, and United Nations. See Annexure 4, a compilation of reports on international investigations.

In general, we found that governments distinguish between day-to-day media work (their relationship with the press and electronic media) and longer term development or information provision. We also found that most countries have some centralised information capacity within government.

6.3 MEDIA RELATIONS - INTERNATIONAL RECIPES FOR SUCCESS

In the countries visited, government gave very high priority to the organisation and conduct of their relations with the media. We noted the following key components of the systems we examined:

- The direct involvement of ministers on a daily basis (for example in Britain, any Cabinet Minister making an announcement attends the daily Cabinet Committee on the co-ordination and Presentation of Government Policy, which is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. In Germany a minister always briefs the press after a Cabinet meeting).
- A regular co-ordination system led by a chief spokesperson in the Presidency/Prime Minister's Office.
- Individual Ministers are accountable to an overall strategy (for example daily teleconferences between the White House and key ministries, regular consultations between government information officers).
- A well-defined system of access to the press (for example the weekly Cabinet debriefing held in Australia, Czech Republic, Senegal and Germany). In Singapore the PM and press secretary have regular press luncheons. Such sessions provide an opportunity for proper motivation of government decisions with full background materials.
- Communication officers are always senior professionals and have full access to the decision-making process. Frequently, government services have either a specialised media stream with its own career path, or provide for ministers to second special advisers from the media on contract (for example Egypt and US).
- Speed - government must have the resources to get its message out immediately.
- There is great emphasis on the importance of communication. Key concepts are professionalism, access to and involvement of, ministers and a high level co-ordination from the centre.

6.4 DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATIONS - INFORMING CITIZENS AND CREATING A CULTURE OF ACCESS.

Electronic media is the most powerful way for government to communicate with citizens. In many larger developing countries such as Brazil, Egypt, Malaysia and India, access to TV is significantly higher (90% or higher) than South Africa (best estimated at 45%). In most developing countries visited, however, the government has had to address the problems of illiteracy and inadequate access to information for poorer and rural communities through active programmes of information provision through centres or mobile information units.

TV and radio, in that order, remain the media of choice for governments in developed and developing countries alike. Particularly in developing countries, the messages are not always delivered directly, but use more popular methods - such as TV "soaps", cultural performances, use of sport and cultural personalities - to get across messages in areas such a health, population and farming methods.

"Slots" or spaces for formal communication from government to the population are not uncommon. The head of government is normally accorded the right to address the nation

when he/she considers it necessary, and the broadcaster is responsible for ensuring that adequate right of reply or comment is accorded to the elected opposition. The US President has a regular 15 minutes slot on national public radio. In Brazil all radio stations are required to broadcast a one-hour programme called the Voice of Brazil each evening. In the Czech Republic, the Prime Minister answers questions for five minutes each week on the private TV channel. In Senegal and Tanzania all political parties are given regular slots on TV and radio. Overall, we found that formal communications from government in this format lacked public interest.

Radio is a crucial vehicle for development information and is used in many countries to reach remote or disadvantaged communities. Community radio is highly effective and is supported financially in many countries, from the richest to the poorest. Second, technology has the capacity to help developing countries to reduce the high cost of getting information to the poorest communities by making it more accessible and cheaper to deliver. In Egypt, for example, local information centres are served from a central agency and have impressive data bases. In Senegal, video units travel the country to bring materials to rural communities.

6.5 DELIVERING GOVERNMENT INFORMATION-MINIMUM CENTRAL CAPACITIES

Most governments have a central information or service provision agency. Increasingly, these bodies are not spokespersons but ensure good standards and centralise the analytical capacity. They are mainly "service providers" of:

- corporate buying of advertising space for government - to reduce cost and improve impact of information campaigns;
- training and development - offering support for the development of the use of new technologies for other government users/communicators;
- research and analysis - from providing a clipping/transcript service to supervising research on public attitudes (opinion polls) and tracking media stories;
- maintenance of a corporate identity for government - through standardising imaging;
- core data - providing or co-ordinating the provision of basic data on the country and ensuring accessibility, for example maintaining a Homepage on the Internet;
- publishing, editing and strategic planning services to other "consumers" (departments/parastatals) in government;
- in developing countries, providing press accreditation and support services to the media;
- visiting services - arranging programmes for foreign visitors.

In line with the current trend in developments in international public service practice, the tendency is for the central agency to outsource (sub-contract) the production and supply of many required services to the private sector.

6.6 CONCLUSIONS

The trend is for central government communications structures to become streamlined and exist, not in a controlling but in a co-ordinating capacity. In this model, the structure consists of a few people whose main responsibility is to strategise around policy and appropriate messages.

In tune with strengthened notions of accountability of government to the electorate, this core group tends to be in direct and constant touch with top management - such as Cabinet and senior politicians and is usually located in the office of the President, Prime Minister, and so on.

The core group consists of the chief communicator in the head of government's office, together with chief communicators from the ministries. In this way, co-ordination of government messages is achieved.

The emphasis is on professionalism. Top communicators enjoy comparatively high status and rank. In some cases they may be political appointees of the various ministers and in others they may be civil servants.

The trend is away from duplication of services offered by civil society, and a separate department of information arm of government which maintains extensive production facilities and tries to duplicate professional services offered by the private sector. "Government should do what government can do best".

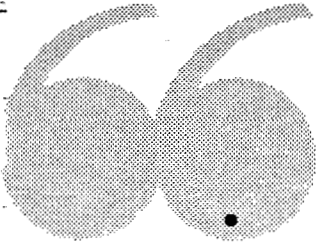
Thus implementation is generally outsourced. Actual production work is contracted out with skills bought from the various professional services available through the private sector. (Advertising agencies, public relations, video, research, and so on).

Substantial cost savings are effected through bulk buying of services such as advertising and research. In the UK, the Central Office of Information (COI) acts as buying agent for the government. In 1994-95 a saving of 30,8% was achieved.

6.7 GENERAL TRENDS

In conclusion, a number of definite trends are identifiable within public sector development in both developed and developing countries:

- Concomitant with the concept of a central co-ordinating structure is the notion of implementation at local level. Thus decentralised and diverse methods of providing information and government messages are devised.
- Community media lobbies are well developed in a number of countries and are usually given recognition and support.
- Radio has been identified as a cheap and effective way for communities to communicate and is often subsidised in some way by the state.
- Information technology is increasingly playing a role in empowering communities in better resourced countries.
- The distribution of government information to communities, particularly in remote areas, has become a preoccupation of governments. Often this trend has manifested itself in what have been called one-stop shops, information centres and open windows.
- Central to this concept is the issue of language, of communications that are accessible and can be understood, and of appropriate media for people who may be unable to read or write, as well as those who may struggle to obtain information for any reason (language, illiteracy, age or disability). The plain language movement has played an important role in changing government



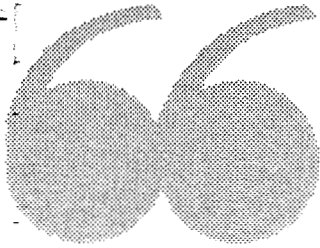
thinking in this area. Its effects are best illustrated in the UK, British Columbia and the European Parliament. In Sweden, all legislation is referred to plain language experts once the legal drafting process is complete.

The concept of subsidisation of various sectors is well-established in a number of countries. In some, the press as a whole is indirectly subsidised through VAT exemptions and tax deductions. In others, community media (particularly broadcast media) is subsidised by the state.

6.8 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE NOTED.

There are a number of environmental issues which should be noted, but which are not dealt with in detail:

- In countries which enjoy a free press, tension and competitiveness between the media and government is a normal feature. Governments simply try to improve their operational effectiveness to get their message out.
- Limitations on the ownership and control of the media, especially broadcast media, are also normal. In some countries, large block ownerships have been dealt with through anti-monopolies legislation. In several there are limits on foreign ownership.
- The principle of diversity is, in many countries, well established and - in addition to the mainstream press - localised and community media is often given support by the state.
- Another international trend is most commonly expressed in legislation to ensure that the right to information and privacy is formally established in tune with human rights norms and standards. Such legislation has been introduced in a number of countries and is subject to powerful lobby where it has not.
- The principle of creating a dialogue between government and citizens is well-established in many countries. Essential too is the principle that government must inform people of its policies, actions and motivations and give the necessary information not only for the exercise of rights, but for the governing of their lives.
- Governments often have internal regulations prohibiting the use of language and images that stereotype or denigrate minority groups and women. The Australian Government has prepared guidelines for all government communicators in this regard.
- The trend is towards the recognition of communications professionals. Thus, rather than appointing communications officers in an ad hoc manner from whatever field or professional background, communications is regarded as a profession in its own right.



CHAPTER 7: South Africa seen from Abroad

7.1 SOUTH AFRICAN MISSIONS ABROAD

During its consultations with other governments, the Task Group met with 19 South African missions and with commentators and officials in 19 countries on how South Africa was perceived and on the ways in which it was being promoted.³²

We were impressed with the determination of South African representatives to market South Africa. In general, abundant goodwill still exists for South Africa around the globe. However, a large majority of those we met sounded alarm bells - over a rising perception of the problems besetting the country and the end of the "honeymoon" period for South Africa.

The lack of a strategy and co-ordination in projecting South African policies and priorities was expressed forcefully by heads of mission, and most strongly by the HoM in the five G7 countries visited. Their points are worth noting in full.

- The term "the new South Africa" is not a sufficient marketing strategy. South Africa will not sell itself.
- Criticism of South Africa is mounting (for example crime and perceived lack of delivery), and there is no clear guidance, or overall strategy, to address these issues.
- Information flow to missions is inadequate. Missions need to know the context of decisions, not just the bare facts, in order to be able to motivate them. It is also essential that material be timely - missions often receive ministerial speeches days after the media.
- In the bigger missions dedicated informative attachés should be appointed.
- There is a need for focus - the missions try to do too much because there is no guidance on priorities. Resource constraints have added further to this problem. At a time when interest is growing in South Africa and the demand for information on mission staff has escalated, the DFA budget has been reduced.
- No facilities for missions to do local research on attitudes towards and perceptions of South Africa.
- Several sympathetic independent commentators noted that South Africa presents a confusing set of messages which harm its efforts to promote its interests. For example, cases were cited where ministers visited without warning, and there was no involvement of the South African mission - which undermines overall credibility. We were particularly concerned that it appears that provincial governments and some ministers do not involve the local missions when travelling, since this results in the sum of efforts being less than its parts.

³² See Annexure 4, a compilation of reports on international investigations and Annexure 17, survey of South African missions conducted by the Department of Foreign Affairs. See also Recommendations, Improving South Africa's Image in the World.

7.2 FOREIGN COMMUNICATION EFFORTS OF HOST GOVERNMENTS

During the visits, the Task Group also investigated the foreign communication efforts of host governments. By comparison, the standard of South Africa's services is below that provided by most countries, especially those which are its main economic partners or competitors. Unless this problem is addressed, it will be difficult for South Africa to mount and sustain the drive needed to maximise the economic and political benefits from the existing international goodwill.

7.3 THE GROWTH OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

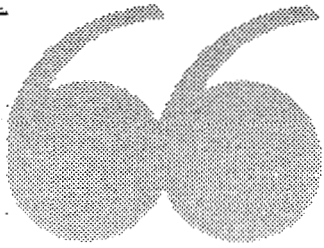
The growth of electronic information systems has transformed the scale of information exchange available to consumers and institutions seeking data. This is especially important in the trade and commerce field, but also in news and information. Virtually every government we visited in Europe, the Americas and Asia, is ahead of South Africa in this area. Comparable developing countries have Internet sites, and major efforts are made to make commercial and statistical information available this way. South Africa needs to develop a national website into which all departments can provide data. There is also an urgent need to provide each mission with access to the Internet, and to improve the level of technology available to them.

7.4 CLOSE CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE TRADE AND POLITICAL ARMS OF GOVERNMENT

Close co-operation between the trade and political arms of government is a feature elsewhere, but seems to be lacking in South Africa. For example, in Egypt and Hungary, the Foreign Ministries operate and integrate cultural, trade and political information services utilising the Internet and diplomatic/cultural missions. In Britain, the concept of "public diplomacy" is used to advance British interests through an integrated programme led by the foreign ministry, but involving other departments and institutions: visits and exchanges, the BBC world service, the news and information arm of the government, as well as trade promotion and information services. The advantage of these approaches is that they explicitly target key groups such as commerce and industry, support communities or exiles, as part of foreign policy activity. These approaches define many of the reforms and developments in foreign policy delivery in the countries we visited. In general, we found that co-operation with the other important arms of government involved internationally, such as Trade and Industry and SATOUR, was insufficient.

7.5 CONCLUSION

We found much to be encouraged by in our visits, particularly in terms of the morale and professionalism of South Africa's representatives. The emergence of a highly competitive international economy, and the range of demands placed on South Africa because of its history, place unique demands on the country's foreign policy machinery. These will require the leadership of the Department of Foreign Affairs but also the co-operation of other branches of government if South Africa is to exploit fully the opportunities which exist.



Chapter 8: Conclusions and the Way Forward

The findings reflected in the previous chapters represent some of the results of 8 months of investigation, research and intensive discussion. The Task Group has sought to reach conclusions that:

- take into account the overall policy directions of government
- address the constraints we have described
- reflect the problems identified with the current structural and infrastructural arrangements within government
- do so within a framework that addresses the problems inherent in our society.
- do so within a framework that takes account of best democratic practice in countries where communications achieve the broader aims necessary if government is to enter into dialogue with society.

8.1 OPENING UP A DIALOGUE: A NEW PHILOSOPHY OF COMMUNICATIONS

Modern communications theory is based on the notion of dialogue. That is, in order to be successful, the communicator must be both communicator and audience. In order to achieve this, old style notions of communications as a way of 'telling' people things, or 'persuading' them to act and respond in certain ways, is inadequate in a modern democracy. The communicator should have, as it were, a relationship with his/her audience, to their mutual benefit.

In South Africa, where government's attempts to open up such a relationship are as young as our democracy itself, and where the majority of the population has never experienced (and is still indeed generally not experiencing) such a relationship, the challenge is great. Where other democracies have had the advantage of a long evolution of ideas and practice, trial and error, South Africa urgently needs to do, in a short period of time, what other democracies have had years to perfect. In short, we must preserve and nurture our fragile democracy, and we must build a human rights culture through the length and breadth of our society.

Government's ability to do so will depend, in large part, on its ability to reach the population and to engage people in meaningful dialogue. This also has great significance for government's commitment to transparency.

8.2 THE STATUS OF COMMUNICATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

This raises a central issue: that of the status of communications and its role in our society. It is common cause that, as a society, we fail to reach the constituencies we most need to address. What is less well accepted or understood is the fact, that in order to do so, we must take practical steps to put communications high on the national agenda. Although no-one would actually argue with this proposition, there are clear signs that, in practice, communications enjoys a relatively low status in the machinery of government. This is

reflected in the uneven and often inadequate delivery of information by different sections of government, the low pay and ranking of government communicators, the failure to recognise communications as a profession in its own right (and not just something that can be taken on by an expert in another field), and in a lack of understanding of the role of press - both by government and in some sections of the press itself.

Thus, it is true to say that, whatever structural, infrastructural or other changes are made, if government in its entirety does not develop an understanding of the role of communications, together with the political will to ensure professionalism, efficiency and information delivery at all levels, the opportunities presented by the new recommended system cannot be realised.

In short, in countries where communications is seen and generally accepted to be successful, the one common factor is its established and recognised place and role in democratic government.

8.3 TAILORING SOUTH AFRICA'S COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

The ultimate goal of the Task Group's vision is the creation of a communication and information system tailored to meet the demands of the broader democratic human rights environment within the particular needs and constraints of the South African context.

Many of the problems government is experiencing can be traced directly to the inherited structures through which it must conduct its dialogue with society. Even where there have been attempts at transforming those structures, the way communications relates to government structures makes effective communications delivery unwieldy and difficult.

As a result, the Task Group has given a great deal of attention, first, to examining the structures that exist and, second, to redefining the basis on which a government communication system should work.³³

The proposed new structures take a number of important factors into consideration:

8.3.1 The need to put elected government in control of communications.

The present arrangements separate the policy making function from the communications that should - according to all the laws of democratic accountable government - support this function. The new proposed system will ensure that government is empowered with a communications arm that accounts directly to and through the political process and reflects decision making and priorities at Cabinet level. Thus Cabinet itself should drive and direct overall policy with regard to communications, while the administration of that system should be directed from the Presidency. In addition, the entire status of communications and its practitioners must necessarily be raised.³⁴

8.3.2 The need to coordinate messages.

The new system will recommend structural arrangements and relationships to ensure coordination and synchronisation of messages from the centre. Thus while implementation will continue to occur at the level of government closest to the structure in question, overall, centralised coordination is seen as essential.³⁵

8.3.3 The need to reach communities via the three tiers of government

The new system will recommend direct structural responsibility for networking through the three tiers of government, thereby establishing vertical as well as horizontal coordination. The aim is to establish a coordinated network of information provision which will, in its turn, streamline information delivery at community level. The new system also envisages centralised support for community media and broadcasting where required.³⁶

33 See Chapters 2,3 and 6 of this Report. See also Recommendations, Structures.
34 See Recommendations, Structures.
35 See Recommendations, Structures.
36 See Recommendations, Structures.

8.3.4 The need to provide limited service support

Although the overall principle is for streamlined, efficient internal services on a carefully rationalised basis, certain core services will be provided to government structures and communities. These core services will be centres of excellence functioning in a highly professional environment, based on a value for money approach.³⁷

8.4 THE NEED FOR STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES.

The question of how to develop budgets, goals and strategies needs to be visited. Ad hoc communications is expensive and often wasteful. Furthermore, it often fails to meet targets and reach audiences.

In this regard, a more professional approach towards communications needs to be developed, including the institution of a culture of continuous evaluation of needs, audiences and objectives. The research conducted by the Constitutional Assembly must be commended.³⁸ It is only through such a process that communications can be tested for its effectiveness at all stages of the process.

8.5 THE NEED FOR CREDIBILITY

One of the aspects we have been forced to take into account is the credibility of the present arrangements. Our reasons are that, above all things, government communications must be seen as credible and trustworthy. People will not simply believe what they hear from structures they do not trust - structures indeed that they do not feel, in some way, that they own. This is so all over the world. In South Africa, Apartheid disinformation and propaganda has left a legacy of mistrust

8.6 THE NEED FOR CORPORATE IMAGE³⁹

One of the aspects that arose during the Task Group's investigations is the failure of government to present a coherent corporate image to the public. This is reflected in a diverse array of stationery, in the failure to identify public buildings outside or to supply adequate signage inside, the way government presents to the public telephonically and by letter, etc. This must form a critical part of dialogue government must develop with society. Government must be seen to be transparent, accessible and, indeed, part of the fabric of society.

8.7 A PROFESSIONAL CORPS OF GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATORS

The key to making the new system work will be the development of a corps of highly professional communicators.⁴⁰

The Task Group's recommendations will, therefore, indicate practical ways in which this can be achieved: through training programmes, mentorship and on-the-job training, accreditation and employment criteria, as well as new ranking. The present system of employing experts in other fields to play the role of communicators has been noted both as diminishing the expertise of a professional category all of its own and, frequently, resulting in inefficient delivery.

37 See Recommendations, Structures and Recommendations Functions and Responsibilities.

38 A New Constitution for a New South Africa, Evaluating the Constitutional Assembly, CASE Report October 1996.

39 See Recommendations 53.

40 See Recommendations, Personnel and Training.

B.B TRAINING

The Task Group will offer concrete recommendations with regard to the development of and budgeting for a specialised training programme for government communicators.

This training programme will be developed in cooperation with the private sector and will consist of topnotch training in a variety of focussed areas.⁴¹

8.9 STREAMLINED, EFFICIENT AND TRANSPARENT: THE WAY TO GO

Arising both out of investigations elsewhere and our assessment of current government policy and thinking, the Task Group identified a need to reduce bulky civil service structures and to replace and restructure them in a way that renders them streamlined, cost efficient and ultimately transparent.

This is, as indicated, in accordance with government policy which has committed itself to the reduction of a bloated civil service, and zero sum budgeting based on management by objectives. Budgets will no longer be granted according to some inherited notion from a previous year of what should be spent. They will be allocated on the basis of what government wants to achieve and how it plans to achieve it. Our recommendations reflect (and commend) this approach.⁴²

Another crucial aspect of this is the need to eliminate wasteful and costly attempts to duplicate what civil society, by its very nature, does better than government. Government should act in partnership with society, not in competition.

There are thus four major benefits that accrue from the management by objectives approach:

8.9.1 Financial benefits

The financial benefits of this approach are clear. By introducing procedures for bulk buying and outsourcing, government can save (as demonstrated elsewhere) millions of rands. Instead of the cost of maintaining large staff components together with the back up and equipment required by such bloated structures government should be able to see a direct return for its communications investment.

8.9.2 Partnership with civil society

The second benefit lies in the way in which government communicates with civil society. The partnership principle implies that, rather than government attempting to duplicate what civil society does, it should work with civil society to attain its goals. Government should do what it does best; it should leave to civil society what it does best. Where common goals can be identified, government should enter into a relationship with civil society.

8.9.3 Empowering civil society

The third benefit lies in the consequent ability of government to impact on the communications profession in the private sector. By developing a coherent and balanced set of criteria for outsourcing, government can ensure that its broader policy objectives (e.g. affirmative action, the promotion of SMMEs) begin to be reflected in the private sector.

8.9.4 Value for money

The result of outsourcing and bulk buying, provided the criteria are right, will also result in government receiving better value for money. Because it will have access to the best, government's communications spend can be allocated to ensure the best possible results.

41 See Recommendations, Personnel and Training.

42 See Recommendations, Functions and Responsibilities and 8.22, Resource allocation and Budgets.

8.10 COMMUNICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

The new recommended system and its roles and responsibilities draws from the best and most effective practice of democracies throughout the world.

It is also, however, firmly rooted in the South African environment. It takes account of the fact that large parts of our society are information deprived. The worst scenario can be seen in our remote rural areas where some 30% of South Africans - the majority of them women - live, poor, isolated and out of touch with the rest of the country and, hence, with democracy itself.

No task is greater or more pressing than finding ways to alleviate the isolation of those who, through apartheid, poverty and present circumstance are deprived of the information with which to take control of their lives and enter into dialogue with government.

Our recommendations include a number of ways in which these problems can begin to be addressed, in partnership with other sectors of society - servicing at community level, the advancement of information technology, language strategies, the encouragement of community media and broadcasting, partnerships between government and other media producers. Others relate to the increased capacity of the national public broadcaster, telecommunications and other infrastructure.

8.11 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & DEVELOPMENT⁴³

South Africa, as the Task Group found during its research internationally, is seriously behind the world - including the developing world - in the area of information technology.

It is essential that South Africa focuses intensively on the rapid development of suitable infrastructure that will cover the country and link all areas - particularly those which are most information deprived - into one national network. Because, as in so many other areas, there has been a massive failure to keep pace with global developments in the past, the task will be massive and must begin virtually from the ground up.

The benefits, particularly to those with poor access to information, are as follows:

8.11.1 Basic information

Once the infrastructure is in place, information can be relayed to communities relatively cheaply. This means that, via an information network, people can gain access to government messages and information of all kinds that they need to run their daily lives.

8.11.2 Building dialogue

In addition, in a relatively cheap, effective and simple way, people can establish a dialogue with government through which they can express their views, make their complaints and ask for specific information.

8.11.3 Access to the world of information technology

The overall advantage is that such a network brings people into touch with a technology that is fast becoming a major focus of communication throughout the world. Many communities and previously disadvantaged groups are making use of this technology. Because of its flexibility - voice, pictures and written language - the user is also able to access information in a way that is appropriate, non-threatening, easy to use and ultimately empowering.

43 See Recommendations, Functions and Responsibilities. See also Annexure 19.

8.12 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY FOR GENERAL GOVERNMENT USE⁴⁴

The use of information technology, as has been observed, is poorly developed in government where it could do much to enhance delivery in a number of areas.

For professional communications purposes it is, to state the obvious, essential. Its development is, however, dependent on the design of a coherent, integrated system which networks with all sectors of government and government-related bodies as well as civil society for the benefit both of internal communications and broader communication with the public.

8.13 THE MEDIA: THE PRINCIPLE OF DIVERSITY⁴⁵

The fewer the voices, the more blinkered the message. This has been one of the consequences of the patterns of ownership and control of media in our society. Ownership patterns are changing; control must still go through a transformation but these internal tasks must, on the whole, be performed by the media itself. It is now a free press, a press that is constitutionally beyond interference; but, like any other body with rights it must now undertake the obligation of its own transformation in order best to reflect the complex and diverse nature of our society.

It is the view of the Task Group that the issue of monopolies must, however, be dealt with within the broader framework of government policy.

Monopolies, effectively the means by which the resources of society can be kept, as it were, in-house to wealthy and powerful sectors, are being addressed in this country, as elsewhere, through a competitions policy. The United States Supreme Court has commented that: "Antitrust laws are the Magna Carta of free enterprise. They are as important to the preservation of economic freedom as the Bill of Rights is to the protection of our fundamental personal freedoms."

The Task Group believes that the issue of press monopolies, especially where they involve the ownership of other stages of the press chain - paper manufacture and distribution should be dealt with by the same process as other monopolistic structures - to which, indeed, they relate.

Diversity must be the goal. It is for this reason that the Task Group has also made recommendations aimed at the support of community media and broadcasting in an effort to increase the number of voices in society.

8.14 AN OPEN SOCIETY⁴⁶

In order to strengthen the principles contained in the Constitution: the right to information and the right to freedom of expression, the Task Group will make certain recommendations and suggestions with regard to Open Democracy legislation and also the removal of anachronistic legislative restrictions that remain on the statute books.

8.15 THE PUBLIC BROADCASTER⁴⁷

Over time, the SABC must transform itself into the national public broadcaster. Regulated by the IBA, it will be independent of government interference, but it will be accountable to society as a whole - to the greater good of all sectors.

In order to do this it must have funding from government and, in order to ensure that this funding cannot be tied, or bound by conditionalities, the Task Group makes recommendations on ways in which this complex relationship can be serviced.

44 See Recommendations, Development Information and Recommendations, Functions and Responsibilities (of the CSA).

45 See Recommendations, The Media Environment.

46 See Recommendations, Access to Information.

47 See Recommendations, The Media Environment.

8.16 CHANNEL AFRICA⁴⁸

The Task Group will make recommendations in relation to the continued existence of Channel Africa and ways in which it can be funded.

8.17 COMMUNICATING INTERNATIONALLY⁴⁹

The lack of a strategy and coordination in projecting South African policies and priorities was expressed forcibly by Heads of Mission in the countries visited by the Task Group. Lack of access to specialised services and resources, including Internet, were cited as major problems. These and other findings are reflected in research done by Foreign Affairs.

It was noted that the standard of delivery is lower than in many other countries - particularly those of the Americas, Europe and Asia. Comparable developing countries have Internet sites, and major efforts are made to make commercial and statistical information available in this way.

Similar problems relate to the way in which visitor support to South Africa - both state and lower status - is conducted.

Recommendations to improve this situation have been included.

8.18 THE QUESTION OF LANGUAGE⁵⁰

A critical factor in the modern democracy is the growing demand on government to speak to the population in a language and manner they understand.

This has important implications as regards the use of language of choice which is, indeed, a constitutional requirement. This is an issue that government will have to grapple with, particularly once the Pan Language Board has developed its language policy. A great deal will hang on these policy proposals, particularly as regards the delicate problem (in the view of the Task Group) of balancing nation-building and unity with the right to communicate in the language of choice.

It must be noted that braille, signing and other such specialised languages need to be incorporated as languages in daily use by large numbers of people.⁵¹

There is, in addition, the problem (common throughout government and much of civil society) of language that is not plain. A growing and relatively well-established lobby exists (certainly in English-speaking countries and Scandinavia) premised on the belief that people have a right to read (or hear) and understand government documents. Legislation, contracts, official correspondence, forms and other written matter used by government must therefore come under scrutiny to ensure that ways are found to make them accessible. The British Rayner Commission is estimated to have resulted in direct savings to the British government of 15 million pounds with indirect savings of some 250 million pounds. The commission checked 171 000 government documents, scrapped 36 000 and revised another 58 000.⁵²

8.19 LITERACY AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

One of the most serious results of apartheid education is that over half of our population cannot read. Solving this problem is not within the focus of the Task Group, but a couple

48 See Recommendations, The Media Environment.

49 See Recommendations, Improving South Africa's Image in the World.

50 See Recommendations, Access to Information

51 See Recommendations, Access to Information.

52 See Recommendations 70 - 73.

of points need to be made where illiteracy or low literacy impacts on communications.

The common response to the problem is to underline the need to use radio when speaking to communities with low literacy levels. Undoubtedly this is so. However, one must also be careful not to reinforce illiteracy by assuming that this is the only means of communication open to us. The effect of this is to deprive people of the opportunity of gaining familiarity with the written word. Print plays a different role to radio and is used in different ways.

At the same time, illiteracy is experienced by those who cannot read and write as a form of disability. Learning to read and deal with written texts is thus a form of empowerment. There is evidence, furthermore, that access to written texts automatically impacts on literacy levels.

It is therefore critical that government avoid the 'soft' option of simply using one means of communication to address a large section of our population. All people should have access to all forms of communication.

8.20 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION⁵³

Affirmative action is a critical part of addressing the apartheid legacy and therefore a continuous theme in the Task Group's report. Affirmative action is implicit in all recommendations made to the Deputy President and must incorporate all sectors disadvantaged by apartheid, as well as by socio economic or other circumstance. Thus disadvantages with regard to gender, disability, age and other factors must be equally reflected. Diversity is an issue here, too, as, if the voices of government and society are male, young and able, the perspective of other groups will not be brought to bear and society will be the poorer for this.

Affirmative action must operate at three levels in the communication chain:

8.20.1 Audience

The needs, sensitivities, language, etc. of the audience must be considered at all times. Practically, this requires careful research and the application of continuously monitored systems of communication.

8.20.2 Communicator

The people who transmit the messages must represent all sectors of society. They must speak with the voices of society. This means that selection and training processes must be reviewed and overhauled.

8.20.3 The producer

Outsourcing provides excellent opportunities for the empowerment of sectors of society. The Task Group recommends procedures for the establishment of criteria to influence the development of private sector production capacity and skills training. This is also in tune with the notion of civil professional society in partnership with government

8.21 THE PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLE

It is the view of the Task Group, informed by local investigations and reinforced by its international research, that effective delivery in the government communication sector is immeasurably enriched by partnerships with civil society.

We are also informed by the broader political perspective of democracy as a process that calls for the integration - and not the separation - of government and society. The Task Group has noted with concern the tendency to duplication, even competition (with civil society) that exists in relation to government communications. For this reason it is in full support of the view, expressed in many countries visited, that government should do what it is elected to do. Where a function can be better performed by civil society, civil society should be used to perform that function. Failure to observe this principle results in the kind of bloated civil service we have today.

Liaison with civil society should, therefore, be a key element of the new communication and information system. And such liaison means more than occasional consultation or farming out the odd job. It means a process of building a relationship with those with the skills, the special knowledge and the networks to reach the nooks and crannies of our incredibly rich, complex society.

8.22 BUDGETS AND RESOURCES

It is recognised that Government faces severe financial constraints. The Task Group has, therefore, developed a framework for a new communication structure which will make efficient use of personnel and resources in the most streamlined manner.

The lack of a clear, agreed system for measuring costs and output also makes it difficult to precisely quantify the impact of the recommendations on the fiscus. Moreover, a detailed costing of the new system would be premature without certain key steps, including the personnel skills audit, the consultative process with the Public Administration Ministry and Public Service Commission, and the detailed design of the CSA. However, it is possible to provide some general comments on the cost impact.

We estimate that savings can be effected in the following ways:

- reduction of duplication, and greater integration of services (providing economies of scale)
- a reduced overall personnel component (in the range of 10-15%)
- lower advertising costs as a result of bulk buying by the CSA (a saving of at least R30m/year)

There will be some increased costs occasioned by the need to set up the new structure within the Presidency and the CSA, by the need to improve training and other services offered by government (e.g. funding for certain services such as the development information service and IT under the CSA), and by some increase in remuneration levels due to the proposed higher level of seniority of some communications personnel. We also believe that the efficiency of individual departments will require an increase in the share of their budget devoted to communications, although this has no net impact on government spending.

An established system for costing and measuring performance will also assist the drive for efficiency. Net savings to government purely on personnel and operations should be in the order of R50m per year, or between 10-15% of current costs.

We also recommend funding for public broadcasting and the community media sector. Parliament has already resolved to fund the public broadcaster on a triennial basis and our recommendation in this regard will hopefully facilitate the process. In the case of community media, government will be required to contribute part of these subsidies. The

willingness of foreign governments and institutions to support this system will ensure that the contribution by the South African government will be modest.

Overall, if the new system is implemented, there are grounds to believe that in the medium to long term savings can be in the order of hundreds of millions of rands. Moreover, the costs to government of the current system include "invisible" losses due the need to duplicate and repeat messages, and the loss of revenues from citizens outside the main economic system.

8.23 MAKING THE TRANSITION⁵⁴

Finally, the Task Group recommends the transformation of government communications structures can proceed.

The Task Group believes it is essential that the wider community continue to be involved in the development of a new government communication system once the intensive phase we are currently involved in is complete.

On the basis that no structure has the capacity to transform itself, and following the principle of partnership with civil society, the Task Group will recommend an advisory body made up of representatives of the professional sector to donate their time and expertise to work with government for an interim period.

In this way, the communications and other related professions will become an integral part of the new government communications system from the start - creating the building blocks for a new and successful partnership.

54 See Recommendations, Structures, Communications 2000.



Recommendations Structures

Cabinet

The communications and information economy sector is key to the management and direction of modern government and the ability of South Africa to address development concerns. By bringing the people of South Africa, wherever they may be and whatever their current disadvantage, into the information economy, we empower society as a whole. In a very real sense, therefore, the information economy will play a critical role in assisting the elision between the 'two worlds' of South Africa into 'one world' in which we can all relate to each other.

CABINET COMMITTEE ON THE INFORMATION ECONOMY

The structures involved in the communications and information economy are heterogeneous, both within and outside government. Successful development will thus depend on good co-ordination, particularly between government departments and with other structures in society engaged in the building of the information economy.

The recommendations of the Task Group reflect this. The issues cross all boundaries in our society. Because of this, Cabinet needs to develop a special and inter-ministerial focus on the information economy and its requirements. This will ensure that national direction and oversight are maintained.

We therefore propose:

Recommendation 1

A Cabinet Committee on the Information Economy be established to ensure top level consideration and inter-ministerial co-ordination of all relevant aspects in this sector.

Recommendation 2

The Cabinet Committee be led by the Presidency in order to ensure integrated and coherent development of policy and strategies.

Ministries involved in this committee could include: Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting; Arts, Culture, Science and Technology; Education; Public Enterprises; Finance; Trade and Industry; Public Service; Environment and Tourism; Foreign Affairs.

The new Cabinet Committee would help ensure that there is good co-ordination between ministries in all matters relating to communications and information.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE

The areas to be encompassed by this Cabinet Committee on the Information Economy will include:

- the building of a dynamic and competitive telecommunications industry that can address the needs of business, consumers and development;
- the building of dynamic radio and television industries that are critical to nation-building, business, culture and development;
- the building of a dynamic communications service within all structures of government;
- the development of a strategy for marketing South Africa internationally;
- the development of a national information policy that brings South Africa and all its people into the global information economy;
- the development of policy and the active promotion of accessible 'plain' language throughout government.

THE GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION SYSTEM (GCIS):

A new structural framework for government communications

The development of a new policy and structural framework for South Africa's Government information system, through all three tiers of government, will depend on a system that is comprehensive, integrated, streamlined and structured for delivery.

We have called this new modernised system the Government Communications & Information System or GCIS.

The GCIS is the term used to describe the entire infrastructure of government communications and information. It is thus the operational framework for the new proposed system. It is therefore proposed that:

Recommendation 3

A comprehensive Government Communications & Information System (GCIS) be established within which framework all government communication & information will be co-ordinated.

The GCIS has been designed to maximise the capacity of the existing government communication 'system', restructured in a fundamental way in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the new system. Thus, it will focus on the:

- development and strengthening of relationships within government at all levels, and,
- development and strengthening of partnerships between government and civil society, in order both to increase government capacity and the capacity of civil society.

Thus:

Recommendation 4

The GCIS be designed in a way that is geared to the optimisation of relationships and partnerships within and between the structures of government, as well as between government and civil society.

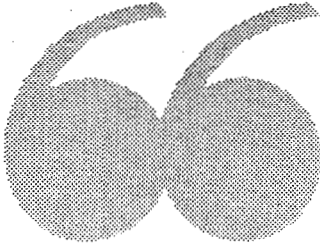
The GCIS should be centrally co-ordinated from as close to the Presidency and Cabinet as possible. In other words, the voice that speaks to the public should be the voice of government itself. Thus it is proposed that:

Recommendation 5

The GCIS be co-ordinated from the Presidency.

Recommendation 6

The Head of the GCIS also be the Head of Communications in the Presidency.



Recommendation 7

The Head of the GCIS maintain close links with & communicate decisions taken by Cabinet - both to the outside world and within the GCIS communication structures.

Effective co-ordination must facilitate but not centralise the information flow.

The second principle governing the GCIS is, therefore, that communications/ information should be delivered by the level of government closest to the consumer of that information. Centralised co-ordination is required for the coherent provision of support services and the harnessing of energies in a co-ordinated, streamlined and cost-effective manner.

This means the information and communication capacity of departments, provinces and local councils must be strengthened through a variety of means.

The emphasis in the GCIS is therefore on co-ordination from the centre and implementation at local level. Thus it is proposed that:

Recommendation 8

The GCIS communicate/deliver information from the level of government closest to the consumer or user of that information.

Recommendation 9

The GCIS develop an infrastructure to ensure coordination between national departments (horizontally), between the three tiers of government (vertically) and between other government bodies and parastatals (laterally).

THE SCOPE OF THE GCIS:

Three areas of Government communications

It is proposed that the GCIS encompass three broad areas of government communications: media liaison, communication services and support, and provincial and community liaison. Thus, it is proposed that

Recommendation 10

the GCIS encompass three main areas:

- Media Liaison
- Communication Services
- Provincial and Community Liaison⁵⁵

MEDIA LIAISON

The first area involves the co-ordination of government statements/communications to the outside world, as well as relations with the media as a whole. This requires a considerable improvement in the ways in which relations between government and media are built and maintained, and is vitally important if the government is to communicate its policies and priorities to the population.

A strong focus on effective media relations is a common feature of most well-run government information systems.

Practical and regular co-ordination at all levels is required. It is therefore proposed that:

Recommendation 11

A weekly (post Cabinet) national meeting of liaison officers be held, chaired by the Head of the GCIS.

Recommendation 12

A series of forums be established in order to ensure regular meetings to co-ordinate government messages at various levels throughout government.

Recommendation 13

A regular meeting between the head of the GCIS and the proposed provincial forum of communicators be formalised in order to maintain a critical link between national and provincial government.

COMMUNICATION SERVICE AGENCY

The second component of the GCIS is the establishment of an agency within government to assist in the delivery of professional communications in an economical and streamlined manner

It is proposed that the agency be called the Communication Service Agency (CSA)

The CSA will support the development of excellence and professionalism within the GCIS and in delivery of information by government to the South African people.

55. See Annexure 22.

The mandate of the CSA is to act as a centre of excellence and professionalism for a number of core communication activities within government. It will provide and facilitate these services itself where appropriate and will also actively support the development of capacity building for its clients.

The CSA will be staffed by a core group of professional marketing and media professionals with highly developed skills in the communications and information fields.

The CSA, as a specialised professional agency, will access, bulk buy and otherwise purchase services on behalf of departments, communities and other bodies including provincial and local government. It will also operate a minimum number of essential services. Functional elements of the existing SACS will be subsumed under CSA management where appropriate.

The selection of services included in its mandate will, however, be based on explicit criteria - services which only government is in a position to provide. One of the essential elements of this will be the facilitation of a development information service.

The selection of such services will be reviewed and assessed from time to time so as to avoid unnecessary expansion or 'bloating' of the structure, and to maintain cost effectiveness and economy at all times.

The CSA will not deal with the content of messages, nor be a voice of government.

It is therefore proposed that:

Recommendation 14

The second function of the GCIS be performed by the CSA, a small, specialised and highly professional agency designed to provide, facilitate, access and purchase selected communications services on behalf of government, using bulk buying and other cost saving mechanisms.

Recommendation 15

The operation of the CSA be cost-effective and streamlined, and that it be evaluated against management by objectives criteria currently being adopted by government in all its agencies.

Recommendation 16

Overall co-ordination be maintained by the Head of the GCIS to which the CSA will be accountable.

PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL LIAISON

The third component of the GCIS addresses directly the need for highly focussed information programmes targeted at communities. This will require support for, and liaison with, a national network of co-operating partners including provinces, local authorities and community organisations and community media.

To facilitate this, we propose the establishment of a system of liaison with provinces and, through provinces, with local structures.

Specifically this will involve the creation of a network of forums in order to ensure channels of communication and the free flow of information vertically between tiers of government.

It is therefore proposed that:

Recommendation 17

The third function of the GCIS be to support a national programme of development information delivered inter alia through the CSA.

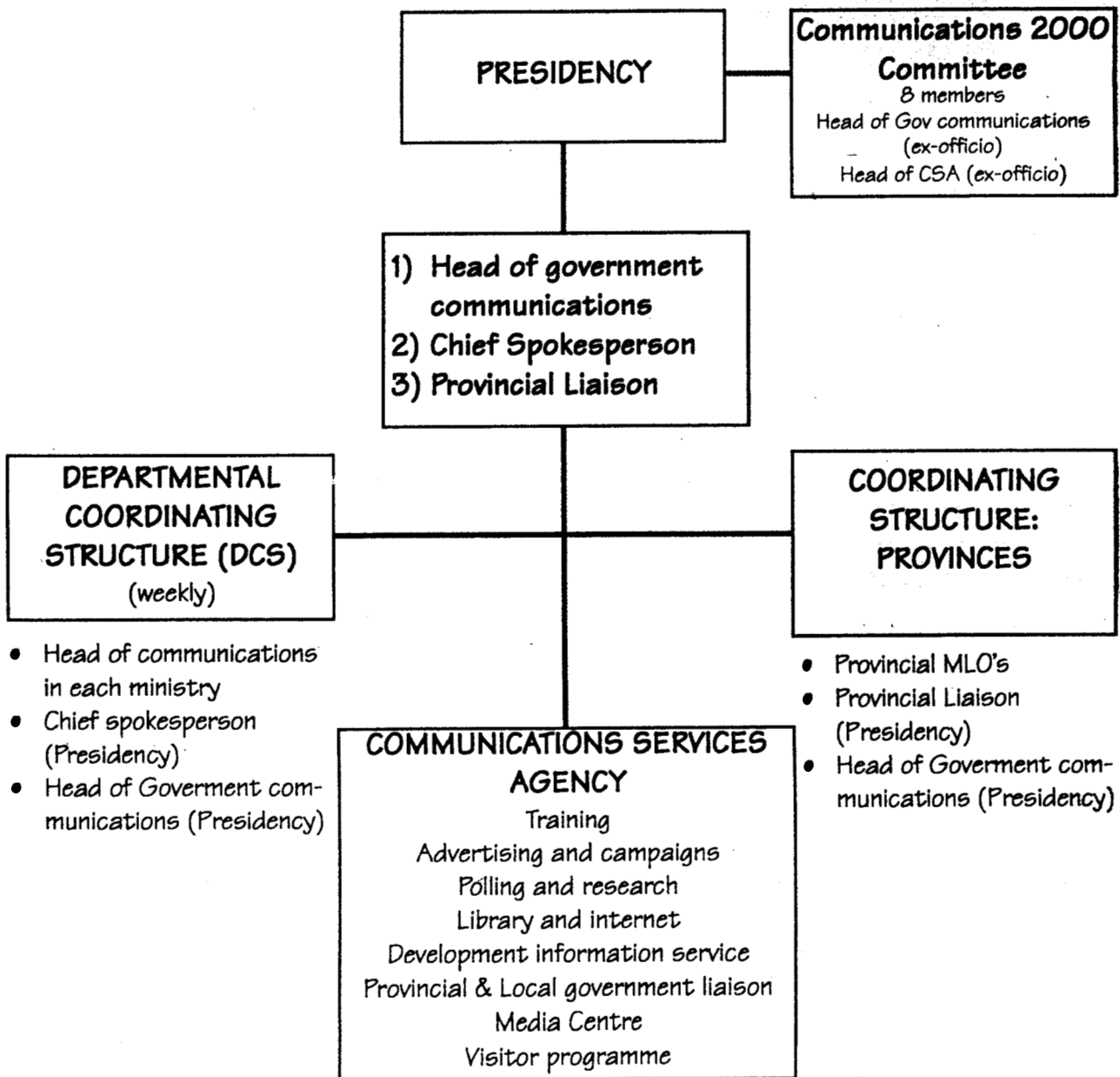
Recommendation 18

A system of networking between tiers of government be developed to facilitate this.

Recommendation 19

In order to build co-operative relationships between tiers of government, a regular consultative forum between the current forum of provincial communicators and the head of the GCIS be established.

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM (GCIS)



A central principle of this function will be liaison, cooperation and partnership with the various role players (government, parastatal and professional) involved in the development of information systems and allied networks in South Africa and beyond.

Recommendation 20

It is proposed that communications officers responsible for provincial and community liaison work in partnership with information providers and disseminators in government, parastatals and civil society.

The principles involved in the National communications structure, ie, centralisation of the communications function in the President's office with a co-ordination mechanism involving ministries, should also be applied to provincial and local government communication. By this is meant that at provincial level, communication should be co-ordinated from the Premier's office which should co-ordinate the activities of the communicators in the various Executive Council portfolios in the same way as at national level. Advertising and purchase of materials, etc, and the outsourcing of projects should as far as possible be conducted through the CSA to obtain the benefits of bulk-buying and discounts.

The same principles should apply to the larger cities and towns with their own information departments which should be centered on the Mayor's or other appropriate elected representative's office and where the same CSA bulk-buying benefits will be used as far as possible and if appropriate. If this is not possible — the danger is that the CSA will become over-burdened with a plethora of requests — the bulk-buying principle should be decentralised to provincial level where the size of the budget (with that of the local government offices) will enable discounts to be secured. The processes in the smaller cities and towns vary so much that it has not been possible for the Task Group to formulate procedures and structures for them. However, it is proposed that the general principles applying to the national and provincial government structures should be applied at this level.

FROM APARTHEID TO DEMOCRACY:

Restructuring Government communications

Research, international investigation and wide consultation indicate that the restructuring described above will do much to prepare the ground for the better delivery of information and effective communications. In order to effect this restructuring, a number of key changes are required:

THE PRINCIPLES GUIDING THESE STRUCTURAL CHANGES ARE:

- efficiency and cost effectiveness
- professionalism
- political control of the communications process
- credibility and transparency

MINISTRIES AND DEPARTMENTS

In accordance with the principles set out above (central co-ordination, local implementation), the Ministries/Departments should author their own communications strategies and manage daily news under the co-ordinating eye of the GCIS.

Some restructuring is, however, required in respect of the present relationship/responsibilities of ministries and departments.

A significant feature of the current system is the separation of responsibilities between the ministry and department. This has led to divided responsibility and, in many cases, the lack of a unified communication strategy. Considerable friction has arisen from this structural arrangement. In the longer term it contains the potential for continued division, thereby resulting in the inefficient communication of policy.

In addition, the government has both a duty and a right to present the case for its policies and actions and this advocacy role needs to be strengthened. This requires that the minister take the lead in developing and managing the communications strategy through the ministry.

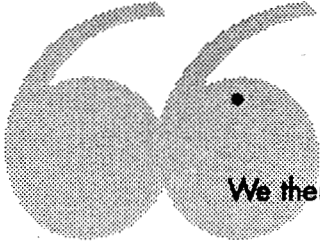
We propose, therefore, that:

Recommendation 21

The management and direction of the communications line function be transferred from the departments to the ministries, reporting directly to the minister whose responsibility it will be to determine overall communications policy in respect of her/his ministry and department.

We further believe that the minister should be free to select an individual of the necessary seniority to act as his/her head of communications as happens in other countries. This appointment can be made either from the public service or by contractual arrangement. In this regard, we note that:

- the scale of remuneration should reflect the key importance of this position;
- where the appointment is made on a contract basis (for the term of office of the Minister), the remuneration should also reflect the lack of security for an appointment which is tied to the minister's tenure;



the appointment should, however, be made in line with the overall professional requirements for heads of communication in the new system.

We therefore propose that:

Recommendation 22

The minister shall have the responsibility of appointing a head of communications, either as serving public servant or on a contract basis. This person, who should meet the professional standards developed for the GCIS, should have a status reflecting the key importance of the position as chief communications officer for the relevant ministry or department.

All other communications functions in the department/ministry should report through the ministerial head of communications who shall be directly accountable to the minister. In this way, the ministry will have the freedom to work directly with communications and liaison staff in the department.

It is important that the close co-operation of the departmental director general be sought. However, his/her formal approval will be required only with respect to his/her role as accounting officer for budgetary approvals.

Where legislation provides for a secretariat in the ministry, the ministerial head of communications may operate from that secretariat.

INTERNAL RESTRUCTURING

We recommend that the President's Office, Deputy President's Office, ministerial/departmental and Provincial communications structures conduct an audit of personnel and services according to criteria provided by Communications 2000.

Internal restructuring should broadly reflect the three key identified areas for government communications: media liaison, the co-ordination of services in consultation with the CSA, and provincial and local liaison. The head of communications in each structure will be responsible for oversight of these functions.

We therefore propose that:

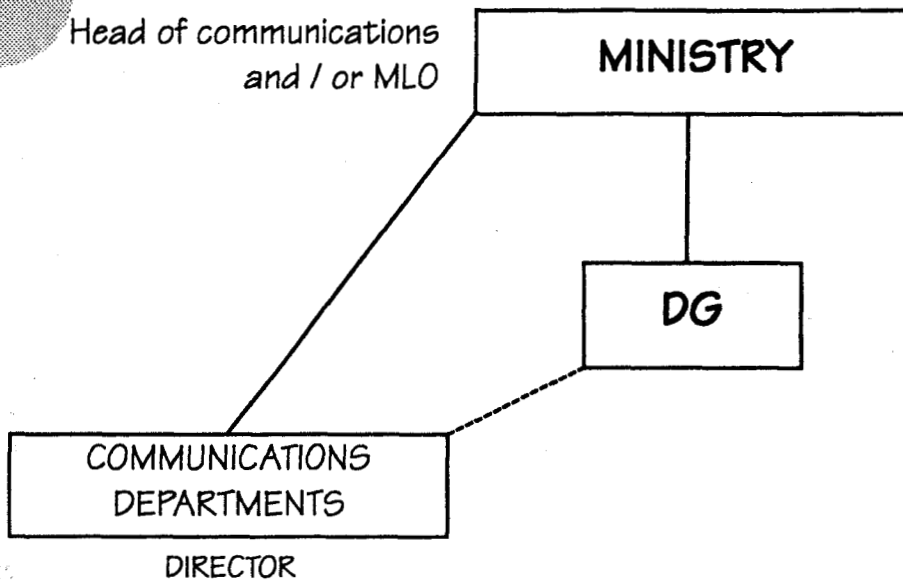
Recommendation 23

The communications capacity in each government body be restructured so as to be able to carry out the three key GCIS functions:

- Media Relations
- Communication Services
- Provincial and Local Liaison

The importance of building and maintaining relationships between the different tiers of government is again stressed.

MINISTRY DEPARTMENT



Head of communications (HOC) appointed by minister and operates from ministry. If HOC is a public servant, he/she will be the head of communications in the departments. If hired externally, director reports to him/her.

THE FUTURE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNICATION SERVICE

As noted in Chapter 6, The Task Group found that there is a strong international trend away from a civil service 'department of information'. This is an anachronistic concept which is unsuited to the streamlined and open style of communications required by South Africa. What is required rather is focus on economies of scale and the empowerment of departments and other sections of government. This is reflected in the proposal for a small central agency which delivers, accesses and outsources essential services.

SACS lacks a clear mandate, and its senior echelons are severely depleted by the decision to take packages. Given its current lack of capacity, the external perceptions of SACS within other parts of government and beyond, as well as its considerably reduced functional role, it has become clear that it is not capable of effective regeneration. However, some of its services, resources and skills are relevant to the proposed CSA.

We therefore propose that SACS be dissolved, and that a part of the transformation process be to oversee the subsumption of relevant functions into the work of the new agency.

We therefore recommend that:

Recommendation 24

SACS be formally dissolved and that, where appropriate, its resources and equipment be subsumed under the new CSA structure as directed by the Presidency with advice from Communication 2000.

Personnel still employed by SACS will be given the preferential option to apply for posts within the new system.

COMMUNICATIONS 2000:

An Advisory Committee to the GCIS Making the Transition

We estimate that the transformation process will take a minimum period of two years. We recommend that this process, which we have called Communications 2000, be driven from within and led by government, supported and assisted by the professional and community media and information sectors.

Thus Communications 2000 will take the form of a policy development and advisory Committee led by the Presidency.

At the same time, it would greatly benefit this process if Communications 2000 involved representatives of the communication and information sectors with a variety of experience and expertise in media and communications. We were impressed with the evident willingness of the many professional bodies to contribute skills and resources to this process. Such an arrangement would have the benefits of

- drawing on the considerable and varied expertise of civil society;
- constituting a visible manifestation of transparent/open government, and its ability to form partnerships with civil society.

We propose, therefore, that:

Recommendation 25

The process of transformation be led by the Presidency with support and assistance of a committee drawn from the professional communications sector.

Professional sector representatives to Communications 2000 would:

- work on a pro bono part-time basis;
- be made up of individuals from the following sectors: marketing, advertising and public relations, community media, research, the information sciences and international communications. We recommend that the selection of representatives be made after consultation with the relevant professional bodies;
- the Head of the GCIS and the Head of the CSA will sit on Communications 2000 ex officio;

The total, in consultation with the Presidency, should have the power to co-opt additional members where necessary.

Thus we propose that:

Recommendation 26

Communications 2000 consist of no more than 10 people, including representatives of government (serving ex officio) and of representatives of the professional private sector (working pro bono). It should however have the power to co-opt additional members if and when necessary.

The prime responsibility of Communications 2000 should be to advise and facilitate the implementation of decisions by government.



Recommendations Functions and Responsibilities

LOCATING GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS:

The GCIS and the Presidency

It is recommended that the Presidency appoint a chief of communications with the necessary political and professional skills to head the Government Communication and Information System.

This will be the most senior person in government communications and should, apart from professional skills, be a person who commands respect, credibility and have considerable experience in the communications field. It is recommended that:

The Head of Communications report to the Presidency and Cabinet.

The Head of Communications be responsible for the three functions of the GCIS (namely media liaison, communications services and provincial and local liaison).

The Head of Communications sit, *ex officio*, on the Communications 2000 committee and be responsible for liaison between the committee and government.

Recommendation 27

A person with the necessary political and professional skills and credibility be appointed to lead the GCIS.

Recommendation 28

The Head of the GCIS report to the Presidency and be the chief communications official in government.

Recommendation 29

The head of the GCIS be overall in charge of the three chief areas of government communications, assisted by senior people responsible for media liaison, communication services and community and local liaison.

Recommendation 30

The head of the GCIS serve as an *ex officio* member of the Communication 2000 committee and liaise between the committee and government.

COMMUNICATIONS 2000: An advisory body

Communications 2000 is conceived as a professional advisory and consultative committee, charged with the development of policy and facilitation of the transformation process over a certain (recommended two-year) period. Communications 2000 will report to the Presidency via the head of communications.

It is proposed that Communications 2000 be responsible, in consultation with the Presidency, for advising on the restructuring and establishment of the GCIS. It shall, as and where appropriate or requested to do so, work with other government bodies.

Its areas of responsibility may include:

Restructuring:

- the initiation of an audit of communications capacity in government;
- advising on the process of restructuring necessary to effect the transformation of government communications according to the GCIS model;
- advising on the development of framework and modus operandi of the CSA;
- acting as adviser with regard to restructuring in various government structures and bodies.

Recommendation 31

It is proposed that Communications 2000 be responsible for advising government during the restructuring and transformation process, and assisting with professional advice on the setting up of the GCIS.

Human Resources

Oversight and advice on the development of a human resources plan for government communications, including:

- the creation of criteria towards the development of a recognised professional stream of communicators within the public service with appropriate accreditation and professional requirements;
- development and oversight of national training and capacity building within the GCIS, including an audit of present capacity and needs;

Recommendation 32

It is proposed that Communications 2000 be responsible for advising on a human resources plan towards the development of a professional stream of communicators. This will include the development of criteria, including affirmative action; national training & capacity building; conducting an internal personnel skills and needs audit.

Operations

Advising on the development of suitable criteria for cost effective outsourcing and bulk buying, according to specified 'qualifiers' and activated through a variety of processes, including twinning, mentorships, and so on.

Recommendation 33

It is proposed that Communications 2000 be responsible for advising on the development of criteria for cost effective outsourcing and bulk buying to be conducted by the CSA on behalf of the GCIS.

International Capacity

Initiating an assessment of international communications capacity and needs; advising on the development of an integrated international communication plan to promote South Africa globally with regard particularly to:

- capacity and resources in foreign missions;
- expansion of delivery of information to foreign missions via Internet and other means;
- improving communications channels between ministries and South Africa's foreign missions;
- assisting with the development of an overseas visitors programme to be coordinated via the CSA.

It is therefore proposed that Communications 2000 be responsible for:

Recommendation 34

Assessing and advising on South Africa's communication capacity abroad: assessing of capacity and needs; improving channels and expanding delivery of information.

Recommendation 35

Advising on the development of a coherent foreign visitors' programme and capacity.

Accessibility

Advising on the development and oversight of national policies with regard to accessibility of language.

Recommendation 36

It is proposed that Communications 2000 be responsible for advising and consulting on the development of policy and programmes to advance accessibility of language and communications in line with the GCIS plan.

Media Diversity

There is a need to embark on a number of initiatives to increase media diversity, such as:

- the promotion of and advising on a subsidy system for the funding of media diversity;
- the promotion of and advising on support mechanisms for community print and broadcast media;
- the exploration of mechanisms, including legislation, to facilitate access by all print media to a fair and equitable distribution system;
- advising on the development of partnership arrangements with sectors involved in the delivery of information at community level.

Recommendation 37

Communications 2000 shall be responsible for promoting and advising on the subsidy and support mechanisms to be adopted for the promotion of media diversity.

Recommendation 38

Communications 2000 shall explore, advise, encourage and consult on avenues for partnership with sectors engaged in information delivery at community level.

Management by Objectives

There is a need to establish a systematic budgeting and planning process for government-wide communications planning. This requires: clear criteria for measuring communications budgets; common benchmarking standards; an annual cycle of planning; affirmative action policies; support and promotion of SMMEs.

It is proposed that the GCIS should establish these new criteria and in conjunction with Communications 2000, and pilot the process for the financial years 1997/98 and 1998/9.

Communications expenditure in all departments and other structures should be measured against objectives. Costly duplication should be highlighted in this process.

Recommendation 39

It is proposed that the GCIS establish an annual planning cycle for communications budgets with new benchmarking standards. This should be piloted in conjunction with Communications 2000 for the financial years 1997/98 and 1998/9.

Other Matters

Other matters as the Presidency may refer to Communications 2000.

SMALL STREAMLINED AND COST EFFECTIVE: The Communication Services Agency

The mandate of the CSA is to act as a centre of excellence for a number of core activities within government. It will provide these services itself where required, and will also actively support the development of capacity building for its clients. A key feature will be the provision of a development information service.

The CSA will thus be responsible for the provision of key essential services to government. It will not, by and large, deliver the content or product of messages, but will brief, commission and out source as appropriate, working in close liaison with civil society. It will therefore maintain a very limited in-house production capacity.

THE PRINCIPLES OF SUCH AN APPROACH ARE THAT IT;

- is more cost effective, allowing for bulk buying and strategic planning;
- encourages creativity and excellence in government communications;
- allows for management by objectives;
- builds partnerships with (and allows for capacity building in) civil society.
- promotes affirmative action and SMMEs.

MODUS OPERANDI

It is proposed that:

- the Communication Services Agency work under the co-ordination and direction of the head of the GCIS, advised and facilitated by Communications 2000.

Recommendation 40

It is proposed the CSA work under the direction of the GCIS, assisted by Communications 2000.

- the CSA is staffed by professionals in the communications field, with specialised knowledge in the required areas. An understanding of how marketing works and how to brief advertising agencies and other suppliers will be an essential component.

Recommendation 41

It is proposed the CSA be staffed by professionals in the communications field and suitably qualified personnel for other functions.

- the clients of the Communication Services Agency will be government: national departments, provincial and local government.

Recommendation 42

It is proposed the clients of the CSA will be government structures at all three tiers.



The CSA will also, and within defined parameters, provide selected services to community print and broadcast media.

Recommendation 43

It is proposed that the CSA provide or facilitate the provision of selected services to the community media.

The CSA will source services from the private sector, with particular attention to criteria aimed at empowering disadvantaged or previously excluded suppliers according to criteria developed by Communications 2000 in consultation with the head of the GCIS. These would include, inter alia:

- expanded criteria to ensure the support of SMMEs, where necessary, twinned either with larger suppliers or with other small and medium sized businesses;
- expanded criteria to ensure the support of production outlets previously excluded by historic or other disadvantage;
- the development of a creative rather than mechanical framework for assessment purposes.
- the development of professional criteria and methods of evaluation.

Recommendation 44

It is proposed the CSA source services from the private sector with particular attention to criteria and qualifiers as developed for the GCIS through Communications 2000.

BULK BUYING AND OUTSOURCING

By allowing departments to act individually as at present, the government is not currently using its substantial buying power in the marketplace to obtain favourable rates. We propose that government departments buy media space through the CSA. In addition, the selection and contracting of advertising and other outsourcing agencies be brought into a system which ensures that advertising targets the real audience, and does not follow historical patterns. Departments could continue to develop messages and work directly with advertising and marketing agents, but considerable savings would be achieved using the CSA to do the buying.

This is borne out by international experience.

Recommendation 45

The CSA will be responsible for the bulk buying of advertising space & selecting and contracting advertising, marketing, research and other communications services on behalf of government.

CAMPAIGN SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT.

Departments need support in the development and management of campaigns. The CSA would have the professional capacity to provide such inputs, prepare client briefs and help oversee and monitor production quality and consistency while the GCIS would ensure co-ordination and avoid clashes with other campaigns.

Recommendation 46

The CSA will act as a consultant, providing support with various aspects of campaign and other communications work.

TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING

There is a need for national programmes to upgrade communication skills for all levels of government. Several media and professional organisations have offered to assist in the development and, indeed, sponsorship, of such programmes.

The proposal is that these sectors be asked to develop a course or courses and ultimately standards for a top notch stream of government communicators in coordination with the GCIS and Communications 2000.

Recommendation 47

The CSA will be responsible for the co-ordination of training & capacity building in line with courses developed with the professional sector.

It is the view of the Task Group that training/orientation in communications should be extended to ministers and to members of parliament.

Recommendation 48

It is proposed that Ministers and Members of Parliament receive a short training/orientation course in communications.

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Opinion polls and research form an important part of the work of most governments. Three kinds of research are envisaged.

Campaign Evaluation

Evaluation by professional research agencies of advertising and other campaigns commissioned by government measured against targeted objectives;

Opinion polls

The CSA would maintain a small specialised unit to link with Cabinet and departments to ensure that opinion surveys are commissioned. The purpose is to evaluate ongoing government performance, and to solicit the views of the public on matters of concern. This would generally be outsourced to dedicated research bodies.

Monitoring

In addition, there should be a standard media clipping/summary service available to all departments and other appropriate clients (e.g. embassies) on a daily basis each morning. This could be done in-house using existing resources under the new management structure, or out-sourced. The current duplication of this service throughout government is wasteful and expensive.

Recommendation 49

It is proposed that the CSA be responsible for ensuring that research is conducted and that government is kept informed through both large-scale research and opinion polls, internal monitoring of daily performance and a media clipping service.

'DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION' SERVICE

The CSA should develop and deliver a news service which collates and summarises key government information for community media, local government structures and community organisations which cannot afford to purchase and receive commercial news services or are otherwise unable to access government information.

Recommendation 50

It is proposed that the CSA be responsible for ensuring that community media, local government structures and remote communities receive key government communication on request through the proposed development information service.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

South Africa needs to develop a comprehensive government home page on the Internet, and all departments, provinces and other government bodies should be able to integrate national data bases into such a system. The CSA should play a leading role in this area. Thus:

- The system should be professionally designed within the framework of the GCIS, and in consultation with information system technologists, so as to provide maximum access both by information provider and information receiver;
- In this process, existing efforts and initiatives - both governmental, parastatal and community based - need to be linked via the network to provide ease of access;
- Existing networks, including the Foreign Affairs network, should be linked to the government network;
- The information delivery systems developed by the Open Democracy structures needs to be linked into the network;
- On the principle that this will be the common vehicle for all government bodies, the CSA must (internally or through outsourcing) facilitate the development of this comprehensive network, including the widest possible network of users. The principle should be multi-use with the maximum supply of non-confidential information;
- There be an obligation on all government structures to supply key information to this system.

Recommendation 51

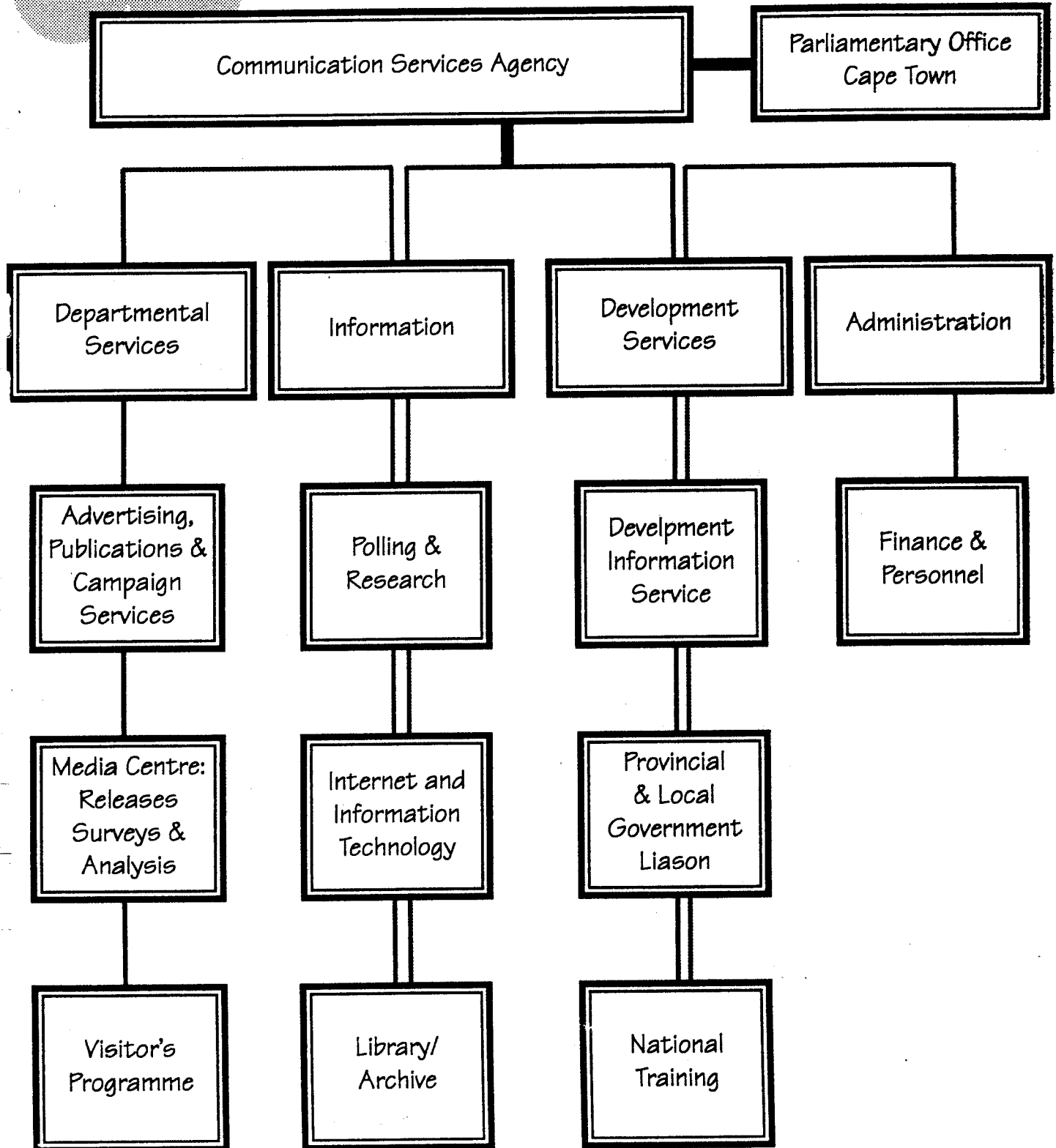
It is proposed that the CSA be responsible for ensuring the setting up, advising and training in relation to a comprehensive, common use information network designed to provide access to a linked government information system.

OVERSEAS VISITORS' PROGRAMMES

The co-ordination of overseas visitors programmes needs attention. At present it falls between Foreign Affairs, Parliament, various departments and sometimes SACS. Foreign missions in this country find this difficult to deal with. Even high profile visits sometimes fall victim to this unco-ordinated approach.

We therefore recommend that the CSA be responsible for the co-ordination of foreign visits, in close consultation with Foreign Affairs and/or the Head of the GCIS (where a

COMMUNICATION SERVICES AGENCY



state visit is involved) and/or Parliament (where a parliamentary visit is involved). The principle is that the work should be co-operative, well planned and executed.

Centralising information in consultation with the relevant structure and making or facilitating practical arrangements, including press calls where requested to do so;

In the case of state or high profile visits, confirming the programme and ensuring that all details are in place;

In the case of low profile visits, identifying a corps of 'freelance' civil society experts and organisations in appropriate fields to take responsibility for ensuring that the desired contacts are made.

Recommendation 52

We propose that the CSA be responsible for the co-ordination, of a co-operative, well planned and executed foreign visitors' programme (in close consultation with Foreign Affairs and other appropriate bodies and outside institutions).

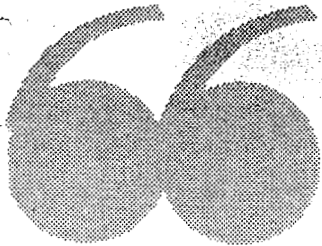
PROMOTING CORPORATE IDENTITY

The CSA, in consultation with the Head of the GCIS and advised by Communications 2000, should assist the development of a corporate identity for government and consistency in government information.

- There is a variety and lack of identity of documents and publications, letterheads, and so on issued by the government. In many countries all such materials are easily recognised by consumers by the use of a common logo or identifying design. We recommend that such a common linking identity be introduced for all government documents.
- Access to and identification of government buildings would also benefit from some form of recognisable corporate imaging. People need to know how to find the government bodies they are looking for. Currently, this is frequently impossible as buildings are often anonymous and forbidding.

Recommendation 53

It is proposed that all Government buildings have recognisable corporate imaging and that documents & other products have a design or official logo that makes them easily identifiable and accessible.



Recommendations

Personnel and Training

CREATING A PROFESSIONAL STREAM OF COMMUNICATORS:

The development of new standards

The relatively low ranking and status of government communicators is in part responsible for the relatively poor quality of work in the current system.

The effectiveness of the proposed system will depend, in large measure, on the criteria set for personnel and the quality of training offered to them. The principle, as has been stated, is for a stream of highly professional communicators. This means that new criteria must be developed against which both performance and training can be measured.

SKILLS AND PERSONNEL AUDIT

Recommendation 54

It is proposed that an audit and evaluation of existing skills be conducted in order to identify problems and build capacity. This should be combined with overall restructuring and allocation of resources for training and development throughout government.

PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION

It is recommended that a set of professional employment criteria be developed for the new stream of professional communicators. The criteria will be tailored to the position in question, but will be based on experience in the communications field, training and completion of a qualifying course where necessary. People applying for senior posts will be required to demonstrate an understanding of the policy objectives of the government and to have some familiarity with political processes.

Recommendation 55

A set of professional employment criteria be developed. These criteria will have the status of policy.

EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

- The position of head of communications will be created in each structure. It is noted that, in some structures, this position already exists.

Where it does, a professional assessment according to accreditation procedures developed by the Communications 2000 is recommended, followed by training if necessary.

This, however, will be viewed as capacity building over a period. Should existing personnel not meet the required standards, they will be given an opportunity to develop their skills and capacity.

- The head of the GCIS should be a senior public servant able to relate to heads of departments and other senior officials at a level of equality.
- The rank of other heads of communications will be decided on the basis of their responsibility according to the new criteria. It should, however, reflect the fact that this is a key role.
- Top communication appointments may be made on a contract basis
- Appointments will take place within the relevant structure (for example, by the minister) and will be governed by established criteria.
- Other appointments will be made by the structure in question (assisted by the head of communications in that structure) according to established criteria.

It is therefore proposed that:

Recommendation 56

The appointment of head of communications should be made according to the established criteria, and training pursued where necessary.

Recommendation 57

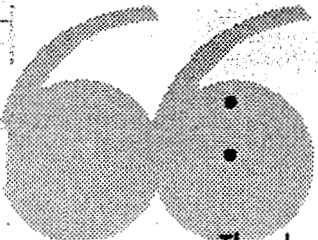
The rank of the head of communications shall be of a sufficiently senior status to reflect the key nature of the communications function. The appointment may be made by contract.

At a provincial and local level, communications staff will be employed according to the new professional criteria. Provincial and local structures will also have access to training and support.

STANDARDISED TRAINING COURSE

Communications 2000 will work with the communications sectors to develop a qualifying course which shall contain the appropriate areas of expertise, with special emphasis on the following:

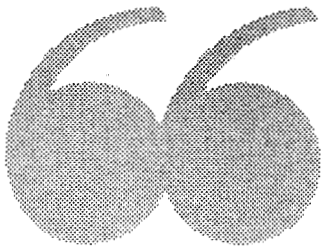
- Media Liaison: an understanding of how Television, radio and newspapers work and how to prepare information for and liaise with media.
- Marketing: an understanding of marketing and advertising, including the briefing process;
- Public Relations;
- Research: an understanding of research and how and when to commission it;
- Policy Education: a broad understanding of governance.
- Information Technology: the ability to use and access Internet and other communication networks

- 
- Familiarity with the techniques for effective communication on TV and radio
 - Any other area identified in the Communications 2000 development of training criteria.

The development of improved capacity and effective affirmative action across the board in the communication profession requires that new partnerships be established between the various role players. There is great potential for the government to initiate this process and involve the relevant schools of communication in the universities and technikons, specialised bodies such as the IBA, the SABC and the private sector. Both PRISA and AAA, and a number of newspapers which are already funding training, have indicated their willingness to join a collaborative effort with government. In this way, government resources could be matched with the private sector, and programmes developed which assist the government and non-government sectors. If this is to happen, the funding stakeholders should be involved in the development and governance of such schemes, and special joint-funding arrangements established, although the process should be activated through, and ultimately owned by, government.

Recommendation 5B

It is proposed that the CSA manage a National Training Programme with the participation of stakeholders and experts to make recommendations on joint funding of activities



Recommendations: Improving South Africa's Image in the World

THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS:

Communicating Internationally

The development of a more effective communications strategy at the international level depends heavily on the day-to-day efforts of the overseas missions and South African representatives from other departments engaged in international work. We believe that there is scope for major improvements in the area which could result from better deployment of existing resources.

These cannot be achieved by the Department of Foreign Affairs alone. However, it is necessary, given the specialised nature of the international community, and the need for co-ordination within government as a whole, that the leadership in this area be with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

It is important that the DFA give higher priority to the management and delivery of information, and the improvement of its overall communications strategy. This should be reflected in a reorganisation of the department, within the framework of the GCIS. The need for co-ordination and rationalisation of resources is paramount, and the planning and management of this function must be centralised if it is to succeed.

The Task Group's international visits, and the views of representatives, underlined the need for missions to be allowed to develop locally tuned information and marketing campaigns. This local autonomy will only be possible if the department upgrades communication and information and develops the capacity to deliver a first-class information system to missions on a daily basis. This should provide not only crude information on government decisions, but the background and motivations for these. The proposed new system of government-wide communications will be vital for this, but the Communications personnel in the DFA will need to edit and adapt material for missions.

The Department should work within the GCIS so as to link and assist with the government home page, and so establish an international data base on South Africa available through the Internet system. This will give missions access to information and also enable them to elicit speedy responses to specific enquiries.

It is also recommended that standard budgets be set for missions to allow them to produce materials for local consumption, and arrange special events. A departmental-wide norm should be established to set these budgets, together with guidelines for appropriate expenditure.

The lack of co-ordination of the activities of different levels of government, and of individual departments within the national government is a source of real concern. Several Provincial representatives made clear their determination to "do their own thing" in marketing their provinces, and this issue of provincial autonomy is a delicate one.

There is a clear need for national, provincial and local governments to co-ordinate their individual marketing operations to avoid clashing.

There is also a need for greater co-ordination with agencies or departments that have major international responsibilities - Trade and Industry, Environment and Tourism, SATOUR and Finance are the most obvious. The current foreign policy document released in July should address the integrated marketing of South Africa.

It therefore recommended that:

Recommendation 59

DFA lead an integrated information system for missions through upgrading overall communications within the department

Recommendation 60

There be greater integration between Trade and Industry, Environment and Tourism, SATOUR and other departments /bodies with international representation to market South Africa.

Recommendation 61

DTI/DFA/SATOUR and others should work with the CSA to set up an international information service on South Africa, via Internet and other means.

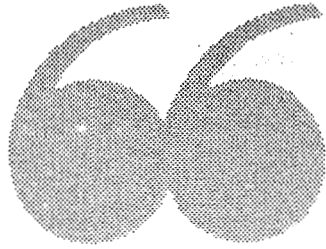
Recommendation 62

Ministers be apprised of the importance of working through DFA for overseas visits, and that a formal approval process for overseas travel be established by the Presidency.

Recommendation 63

A co-operative mechanism be created to co-ordinate the overseas visits of provincial government representatives and statutory bodies. Utilisation of this mechanism should be a requirement if provinces are to obtain the practical involvement and support of SA missions abroad.

It was also noted that there is a need in large strategic missions for attachés who are specialists, especially in communications.



Recommendations: Information Development

INFORMATION FOR EMPOWERMENT:

Working in partnership with society

The guiding framework should be the development of a network of information service delivery points throughout South Africa.

Via this network, and through the new government network based in the CSA, government will have the ability to connect with communities throughout the country.

This, or similar, systems are in current use in a large number of countries and are seen, ultimately as the most effective long-term way, on a mass basis, to:

- deliver information and government messages directly to communities in a regular, large scale and (once the infrastructure is in place) affordable way;
- open dialogue with the broader public through a two-way flow allowing for communication to, as well as from, government;
- deliver and receive information in a way that is versatile and takes account of illiteracy and visual or auditory disabilities as it gives the option of sound, images or the written word.
- provide large-scale access to information technology, in itself a development objective.

In the design of the government system, due attention should be given to the above factors, together with questions of accessibility of language, design and other access requirements. The principle should be that information provided must be accessible, usable and thus empowering.

Because there are a large variety of important initiatives, governmental, parastatal and in civil society, the government should attempt to help facilitate the development of a network of delivery agents, to ensure that, insofar as is possible, costly duplication and unco-ordinated delivery is avoided.

Recommendation 64

It is proposed that the design of the government electronic system give special attention to efficient co-ordination with existing networks as well as to the question of communications (design and language) that is accessible and ultimately empowering.

Particular note must be made of the Open Democracy initiative and the importance of ensuring that this legislation serves, not only those who already have access to information, but those who do not.

MULTIPURPOSE INFORMATION SERVICE CENTRES

Initiatives already underway to develop a network of Multipurpose Information Service Centres should be supported. A number of organisations, parastatals and other bodies have already done developmental and some implementation work in this regard. This work should be supported by government and every attempt should be made to facilitate co-ordination of activities, balanced distribution, adequate focus on remote areas and cost effective partnership agreements between the various players.

Such centres have been declared a Presidential Lead Project.

Recommendation 65

It is proposed that the GCIS promote and accelerate the development of Multi Purpose Information Centres.

THE ROLE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Department of Posts Telecommunications and Broadcasting has access to a network of post offices and agencies. If each post office and agency is supplied with a dedicated telephone line and solid state monitor, people visiting post offices can, in a variety of simple ways, access information and remain in touch with government thinking by image, voice or the written word.

The opportunity, therefore, exists for government to communicate directly with people through these means, as well as providing a mechanism whereby information can be requested and supplied.

As an initial step, this would be an important and implementable way of linking government with the people in a reasonably short period of time and at relatively low cost. It is noted that there is a possibility of commercial sponsorship in this regard.

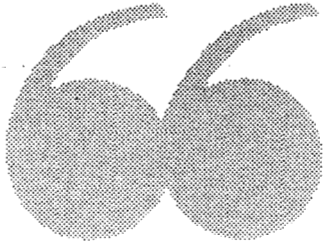
Recommendation 66

It is proposed that the GCIS give support to the Department of Posts Telecommunications and Broadcasting proposal for the development of a telecommunications project designed to link people, through post offices, with government information systems.

BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE

In order to achieve the objectives of linking the mass of the population and thereby addressing the massive disadvantages that result from 'isolation' from the main stream of world communication and information systems, we strongly recommend that government (via the GCIS) give attention to the urgent development of suitable infrastructure in the following areas:

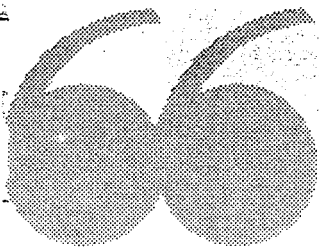
- information technology infrastructure and the supply of at least one information point in each community within a reasonable period of time;
- broadcasting signal distribution so that the limited TV and radio footprint can be extended. In most developed countries, there is close to 100% coverage; in South Africa, the figure is well short of this. Transmitters need to be installed in rural areas and linked with satellite systems.



Recommendation 67

It is proposed that the capacity and extent of existing infrastructure be bolstered and extended, and that information technology infrastructure and broadcasting networks be developed and put in place as soon as practicable.

The information and communication development drive should become a factor in other key government sectoral work such as the National Youth Commission, the Women's Desk, the Disability Desk and so on.



Recommendations

Access to Information

The provisions made for access to information reflect South Africa's commitment to an open society, encompassing international principles regarding access and freedom in the sphere of information.

Practically, as is clear, there is a great deal of work to be done to ensure that these provisions become a demonstrable part of the lives of South Africans. However, a number of immediate or early steps can be taken to improve the communication and information environment and make it more responsive to the needs of an open society..

OPEN DEMOCRACY LEGISLATION

The establishment of a statutory environment which guarantees the citizen right of access to government information is essential. It is noted, however, that:

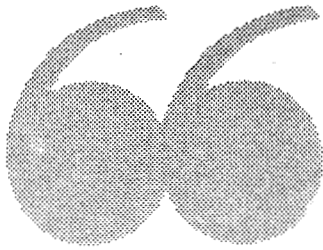
- the promulgation of the legislation has been delayed for a number of reasons, including cost of implementation;
- the implementation of the legislation needs to be linked into the overall proposed networks designed to deliver information at local level. If it does not do so, the ODA runs the danger of serving only business and the press and failing in its major objective - the provision of information to the mass of South Africans.
- It is the view of the Task Group that the GCIS should, in the process of ensuring the delivery of information at community level, create an environment in which obligations of the ODA can be met with regard to all South Africans. And that,
- The ODA should be promulgated (after due process through Parliament) as soon as that capacity has been realised.

Recommendation 6B

The GCIS should do all within its powers to promote an environment conducive to the full public use of the Open Democracy Act by all South Africans.

REMOVAL OF ANACHRONISTIC CENSORSHIP LEGISLATION

We propose that antiquated censorship legislation be identified as a matter of urgency. It should then be referred to Cabinet and Parliament for repeal according to the established processes.



Recommendation 69

It is proposed that restrictive and anachronistic legislation be identified and removed from the statute books.

PLAIN LANGUAGE AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The demand for information in language that is accessible and understandable by its users is growing all over the world.

It has been shown that the use of plain language by governments has not only played a considerable role in the development of a more informed and empowered public, but has also saved governments large sums of money. It has also been noted in submissions and international experience, that a lack of understanding of government documentation affects conformity with requirements, poor access to benefits, high rejection rates, and demands large numbers of personnel to clarify and explain to the public what should have been clear in the first place. Sometimes public safety is affected, as when the type size and language style of instructions on medication is inaccessible to the user.

It is therefore recommended that government conducts an investigation of government documentation and produces proposals on actions to be taken in this regard, including a cost efficiency study. Once such proposals have been developed and are implementable, government should issue a series of regulations with the requirement that the language and design of all new documentation be accessible and appropriate to its audience;

Recommendation 70

It is proposed that the Cabinet Committee on the Information Economy be set up to investigate and make recommendations on strategy with regard to plain and accessible government documentation.

Recommendation 71

It is proposed that, following these recommendations, government issue a series of regulations/directives with regard to all new government documents.

This documentation should include legislation, regulations, white papers and other policy documents, government forms, standard letters as well as standard contracts.

At a later stage, key existing documents should be 'translated' into accessible language.

Recommendation 72

It is proposed that key existing documents be 'translated' into plain language and designed in a way that is accessible.

It is also recommended that consideration be given to the introduction of a language unit in Parliament to ensure that the language and layout of legislation is accessible to the public.

Recommendation 73

It is proposed that a language unit be developed in Parliament to check, according to established and agreed guidelines, the language of legislation before it is promulgated and after it has been through the formal legal and parliamentary process.

THE LANGUAGES OF SOUTH AFRICA

It is noted that the Pan Language Board is in the process of developing language policy. In addition to the 11 South African languages, however, the Task Group wishes to highlight the necessity to include special languages, such as braille and signing, in communications and information policy at all levels.

Recommendation 74

It is proposed that special languages, such as braille and signing, should - in line with the Bill of Rights Equality Clause - be incorporated for all practical purposes in the design of government communications.

ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTATION

There are a number of impediments (some contractual) to the dissemination of government documentation. Legal opinion⁵⁶ provided to the Task Group indicates that such information should be disseminated without restriction and cannot be copyrighted by commercial concerns or otherwise restricted. Government information should be available to the public who should not have to rely on commercial concerns with proprietary rights as their only source.

It is therefore recommended that Departments and Statutory bodies be required to make all documentation printed by the Government Printer and others available in electronic form to:

- the new GCIS electronic network for immediate distribution;
- libraries and Community Information Service Centres and other places of public information.

Recommendation 75

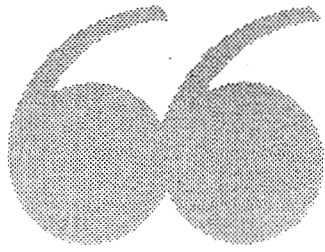
It is proposed that all non secret government documentation be made available to the public via the new government information technology network as well as public libraries and other information centres throughout the country.

It is further recommended that some means is found to provide for the comprehensive cataloguing of all government documentation.

Recommendation 76

It is proposed that cataloguing of all government documentation, past and present, takes place.

56. See Annexure 21



Recommendations

The Media Environment

FACILITATING CHANGE:

Infrastructure and Empowerment

In the analysis by the Task Group into the Media Environment a number of steps that could be taken by government were identified.

FUNDING AND RESOURCES FOR THE NATIONAL PUBLIC BROADCASTER

Reference was made in the above chapter of the need for Parliament to adopt a triennial arrangement for the funding of the public broadcaster.

It appears that in 1996 the resolution of Parliament in this regard was not complied with and the public broadcaster had to seek interim funding from government. This is not a desirable state of affairs because the structured triennial budgeting process is designed to limit political interference in public broadcasting.

Such funding was required to extend the footprint of broadcasting networks to rural areas and for the funding of public service aspects of the National Public Broadcaster, such as educational and RDP programmes.

It is essential that the National Public Broadcaster has secure funding to perform its role and so that planning and strategising can take place without uncertainty.

It is therefore specifically proposed that the recommended Cabinet Committee on the Information Economy, if instituted, should place this item high on its agenda for resolution. Parliament should do likewise.

Recommendation 77

It is recommended that the recommended Cabinet Committee on the Information Economy place the issue of funding for the SABC high on its agenda for resolution. Parliament should do likewise.

RESOURCES AND FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY MEDIA

We recommend that recognition should be given by government to the Independent Media Diversity Trust as the interim funding administration agency for this sector.

There is evidence of tremendous international donor interest in the community radio sector. The Danish Government concluded a funding arrangement for community radio on a rand-for-rand basis with the government, which arrangement has proved successful for the community media sector.

It is accordingly recommended that government match the funds provided by international donors for community media on a rand for rand basis.

It is further recommended that government facilitate the process of setting up a statutorily recognised media development agency comprised of independently elected trustees, which agency will operate a statutorily recognised subsidy system for community and independent media in South Africa.

Recommendation 78

It is recommended that government match the funds provided by donors for community media on a rand-for-rand basis.

Recommendation 79

It is proposed that government facilitate the process of setting up a statutorily recognised media development agency for the dispensing of subsidies to this sector.

CHANNEL AFRICA

The provision of information on South Africa to the continent is important to the long term goal of building democracy and prosperity, and to the advancement of South Africa's national values, trade and commercial interests. While this is widely recognised as a national interest, it is not one that falls within the mandate and responsibilities of the national public broadcaster.

In line with the way in which similar international broadcast stations are funded in other countries, we recommend that the funding of Channel Africa be resumed.

It is therefore proposed that funding be made available through Department of Foreign Affairs, in order to keep Channel Africa on the air.

Recommendation 80

It is recommended that the funding of Channel Africa be provided through the Department of Foreign Affairs, in order to reinstate the ultimate value of Channel Africa.

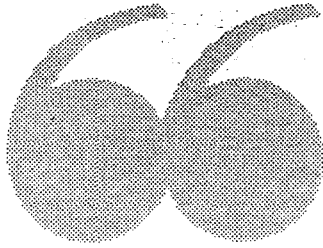
MEDIA DIVERSITY

It emerged from the survey on ownership and control of the print media in South Africa that there are entrenched anti-competitive and restrictive practices that exist within the industry.

The strongest element of the legacy of monopolistic control in this sector is in the area of distribution. Both Nasionale Pers and Allied Publishing have indicated to the Task Group that they would be amenable to a restructuring of the two distribution monopolies along the lines of common carrier provisions being imposed upon a centrally co-ordinated distributor.

Although we have made findings to the effect that the monopolistic practices within the industry should be referred to the competitions board, and to the Task Group which is drawing up anti-trust law for South Africa, there is a need for a specific recommendation in this regard.

It is proposed that the existing distributors of mass market newspapers in South Africa be licenced with common carrier status in terms of legislation that would require distributors to give fair and equitable treatment to all newspapers and periodicals that require their products to be distributed.



Recommendation B1

It is proposed that the overall question of monopolies within the print media industry be referred to the Competitions Board and be dealt with under the broad policy framework of competitions policy.

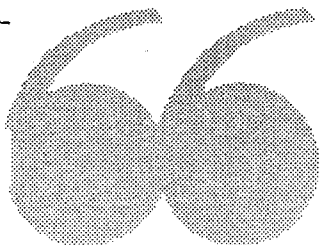
Recommendation B2

It is proposed that the existing distributors of mass market newspapers in South Africa be licenced with common carrier status in terms of legislation that would require distributors to give fair and equitable treatment to all newspapers and periodicals that require their products to be distributed.

The C-Span service in the United States and similar services in other countries provides unedited accounts of parliamentary debates, committee meetings and inquiries and similar proceedings to TV audiences. It enables the public to view important government activity without an editorial filtering process through a correspondent or a reporter. Once the system has been established it becomes a relatively low-cost operation involving camera and sound crews and a transmission feed. It is proposed that such a system be investigated for broadcast by the SABC preferably by satellite.

Recommendation B3

It is proposed that parliament institute an investigation of a C-Span type parliamentary TV service for South Africa to be conducted by the SABC with appropriate funding appropriations and via satellite.

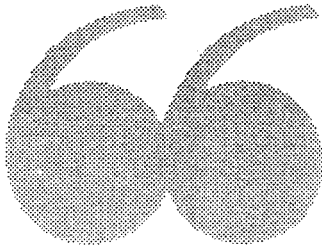


Implementation Timetable

Suggested timetable for implementation

The following is a proposed timetable for key steps in the implementation of the recommendations:

- Jan '97 • launch of Departmental Coordinating Structure under Presidency and commencement of weekly post-Cabinet debriefing
- commencement of consultations with Minister of Public Administration and Public Service Commission on rankings/professional stream
- release of report and submission to Parliament
- Feb • establishment of Cabinet Committee on Information Economy
- appointment of Communications 2000 Committee
- assessment of transitional communications budget for FY 1997/98
- March • approval of GCIS positions within Presidency
- initial meeting to establish provincial/national coordinating structure
- initiation of audit of existing services and delineation of SACS functions to be carried forward into CSA
- elaboration and development of CSA organogram, personnel and operations
- April • report to Cabinet Committee by DFA on integrated information strategy for international marketing/promotion
- June • appointment of GCIS staff in Presidency (Head, Head of CSA, Provincial Liaison, Chief Spokesperson)
- commencement of national skill audit
- July • creation of CSA
- launch of government homepage in Internet
- deadline for implementation of new departmental structures appointment of Head of Communications and budget system
- national meeting on training programmes
- Aug • launch of development information service under CSA
- Sep • closure of SACS
- launch of bulk buying system for government adverts under CSA
- deadline for all departments to join government Homepage
- establishment of Media Development Agency (MDA)
- creation of professional stream within Public Service
- Jan '98 • deadline for implementation of new government "corporate identity" at all levels of government
- Dec '98 • completion of Communications 2000 Committee mandate



Submissions, Presentations, Meetings

A call for submissions was advertised in 6 of the 11 official language in all major newspapers as well as through the electronic media.

The Task Group actively pursued submissions from a variety of stakeholders, structures and groupings. Individuals/groupings who sent in submissions; made oral presentations or met with the Task Group are listed below:

J.B. Pye

A. Kahane, Centre for Innovative Leadership

Manase Neo Sefathe (Gauteng Housing & Local government Ministry)

Sam Tsim

Gerald Miller

William Winnaar

Shupinyaneng

Mark Wilson

Prof. J.M. Maseko, Technikon Pretoria (Nelspruit Campus)

Ponsamy name illegible Signed: "Slave of the apartheid of Swaziland"

Richard Yates

Mahlangu

Laka, President of Mamelodi, Boxing Administration

Jacob Modiwe

Malebe, RDP Masakhane Ministries

MVS Mnguni

T Govender

M Sibanyoni

Northern Consultative Forum

GE Saddam Signed: "Afrikaner"

J Mavuso

EC Simon

TJ Simdame

S Gumede, SACP Branch, Inanda, Newtown

MP Moalosi

JJN Cloete, Emeritus Professor, Public Administration

P du Preez, du Preez Enterprises

Sonja Schmidt

Anthoni van Nieuwkerk, Foundation for Global Dialogue

CD Kneale

CJ du T Visser, PIERD Resources

Mike Webber

Elna Cronje

RM Cillie, Department of Arts, Culture, Science & Technology

MVS Mnguni

PH Stapelberg

GP Pretorius

T. Dudley

MJ Lawrence

DA Celbekhulu, Orange Farm Information Centre

JH Van Deventer, Chief Executive: Newspapers Nasionale Pers

D Hlatshwayo, Kwa-Thema Township

CY van der Merwe, Department of
Environmental & Cultural Affairs

TA Mathibe

T Mangena

LA Rushby, UCT Libraries,
Government Publications
Department

HI Moran, Director: Libraries,
Durban Municipal Library

JP Driver-Jowitt

JJ Bester

G Subramoney

BV Peter

KJ Knowler

MD Mill, MD, The Holding
Company

Soul City (Institute of Urban
Primary Health Care)

ND Chotoo

NG Hulley, Head, Provincial
Communications Services,
Northern Province

Pat Rogers Public Relations

R Kutama

Sally Timmel, School of Economics,
UCT

Greater JHB Transitional Metro.
Council: Comm. Services

R Muller

Media & Broadcasting Consultants
Management Information Services
Treasury: Greater JHB Metro.
Council

R Reddy

G Perry

B Tshabalala

J Winter

L Bekker, Electronic Law Publication

Public Relations Institute of SA
(PRISA)

SACS - Gauteng Provincial Office

Office of the Chairperson, Western
Region District Council

E Cape Provincial government

Learn & Teach Publications Trust

National Community Radio Forum
(NCRF)

Western Region District Council

H.T. Nteanyani

Northern Cape Legislature

National Association of
Broadcasters

John Hall, National Peace Accord

Kate Wild, IDRC

Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri, SABC

Stephen Laufer, Business Day

Julian Bird, SAPA

JP Louw, Karen Thorne, Chris
Gutuza, Lumko Mtimde, NCMF

Clive Emdon, IMDT

Richard Webb (UK)

Sandy Mackie, Director for
Management Information Services
in the Northwest Province

Robin McGregor

Prof. Bonganjalo Goba

Dennis Mashabela

Prof Wiseman Nkuhlu (DBSA)

AAA

PRISA

NITF

Defence Secretariat

Black Journalists Group

South African Communciation
Service (SACS)

Channel Africa

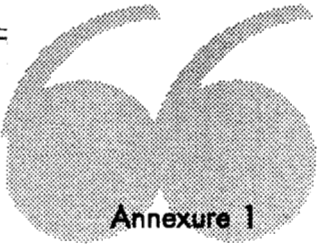
SAUJ

Professor Guy Berger (Department
of Journalism, Rhodes University)

Independent Newspapers

Black Editors Forum
Conference of Editors
Nasionale Pers
Black Sash Advice Office
MWASA
Foreign Correspondents'
Association
Freedom of Expression Institute
Print Media Association
Moeletsi Mbeki
CSIR
Sached Trust/Upbeat Magazine
READ
Department of Health and
Disabled Peoples' NGO's
Speaker of Parliament
Government Media Liaison
Officers
Portfolio Committee on
Communications
Democratic Party
Dr Bernie Fanaroff, RDP Office
Chief Management of the
Department of Foreign Affairs
Constitutional Assembly
Ministry of Safety and Security
(Peter Gastrow)
Deputy Minister to the Deputy
President, Dr Essop Pahad
Meeting with Communications
Director from the President's Office
The Postmaster General
Mr Carl Niehaus of the ANC
Times Media Limited
Eastern Cape News Agency
(ECNA)
Media Research Consultant,
Sweden
De Witt Coetzee (Department of
Public Service & Administration)
Michael Zulu

E.L. Ndlovu
Mpumalanga provincial
communications officials
Kwa-Zulu Natal Provincial
Communication Forum
Free State provincial government
and private sector
Northwest Communication Service
Scarborough Publications
International
Joint Provincial Government
Submission
Multi-Choice Africa
Institute for the Advancement of
Journalism
Ian Dewar, Community
Communications and network
systems
Heloise Emdon, social specialist
Meetings with provincial
communications officials and
NGO's in all nine provinces
ANC Electronic Information Unit
Interdepartmental Liaison Forum
National Department of Agriculture
Mr Robin McGregor was
commissioned to do additional
research and two subsequent
reports were produced entitled:
The Control of Black Business and
Suppliers of Consumables to the
Print Media: Distribution of
Newspapers and Magazines.
R. Gibson of Editors Inc.
Dave Allen
Departmental Liaison Officers



Annexures

- Annexure 1 Questionnaires sent to Ministries, Departments and Provinces
- Annexure 2 Communicating Government: Government Coverage in the media: 1 April 1996 - 23 June 1996: Media Monitoring Project
- Annexure 3 Patterns of Ownership and Control of the South African Media
- Annexure 4 Reports of International Visits
- Annexure 5 Discussion document for a meeting with representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs
- Annexure 6. List of censorship legislation identified by the Freedom of Expression Institute
- Annexure 7 Analysis of the questionnaires sent to Ministries, Departments and Provinces
- Annexure 8. Submission by Media Liaison Officers Forum.
- Annexure 9. Report of meeting with Departmental Liaison Forum.
- Annexure 10. Submission by the Provincial Government Communications Forum
- Annexure 11. Submission by SACS
- Annexure 12. Media in the Sunshine: The establishment of a Media and Development Agency: Submission by the National Community Media Forum
- Annexure 13 AAA proposals to Comtask
- Annexure 14. Remarks to ComTask on Ownership of the Press: Prof Guy Berger (Rhodes University)
- Annexure 15. Submission by the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism: Allister Sparks (Executive Director)
- Annexure 16. The international exchange of information and increasing efficiency through shared knowledge in government communications: Kate Wild (International Development Research Centre)
- Annexure 17. Department of Foreign Affairs Survey of Missions
- Annexure 18. Submission on Print Media Distribution: KMM Investments
- Annexure 19. ANC Technology Unit submission.
- Annexure 20. Presentation by the Disabled People's Forum and the Department of Health
- Annexure 21. Opinion on copyright on public documents: Jonathan Klaaren
- Annexure 22. Opinion on provincial powers in respect of policy matters: Jonathan Klaaren.
- Annexure 23. Government spending on Communications.