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## **Open Letter to the office of the Minister in the Presidency, Media Development and Diversity Agency and the Office of the President**

It is with deep regret and anguish that the Association of Independent Publishers (AIP) is writing this letter. As the president has made several announcements regarding economic relief to South Africans during this testing time, it seems that community print media is yet again forgotten.

In all of the relieve measures the president has made, independent community media has been sidelined and it is clear that the president does not regard the sector as an important contributor to not only the economy, but the communities it serves.

The Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) is yet again playing hide-and-seek at a crucial time. It recently announced an emergency relief fund and gave our members less than three days to apply. The conditions on how the money was to be used were not only unclear but completely absurd. The emergency fund was a clear indication that the MDDA is out of touch with realities on the ground. We are to this day not clear how many publications received the grant and if there will be any further relief offered. The MDDA has shown that it does not care about the print sector and is willing to see it die a slow, painful death.

I am sure that as the economy is going through the current challenges, it is well known that corporations are to cut advertising spend which is a huge income loss for the community print sector. Something the government, MDDA and the Minister of the President is simply ignoring.

Our print members are still waiting to see a directive that will push government departments to place advertising in community newspapers, which was promised to the sector, more than a decade ago. The issue of advertising is a sign of lack of political will by those in power to help keep the sector afloat. We are also very distraught that the money that the Competition Commission set out over a year ago as compensation especially for the community print as a result of the advertising cabal has not in any way reached community print.

As a solution to our continuing challenges we propose the following:

1. MDDA provides the emergency fund to all AIP member publications.
2. The Presidency must mandate all government departments to spend at least 30% of their advertising on community media.
3. The money that the Competition Commission fined mainstream media on the advertising irregularities must be made available to community media especially community print and the AIP, with immediate effect.

### **ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT PUBLISHERS**

Section 21 Reg No: 2005/039586/08

#### **Directors:**

T Nkosi, F Maseko, D Ntsanwisi, S Mboleka, P Lategan, W Fana, A Mokhwa, S Makgobatlou, M Mkhize  
C Mohlala (Executive Director)



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4. The AIP as an NPO be allowed in the period of 2020 to issue section 18A certificates to corporates that will be willing to make the donations to them.
5. The MDDA avails a budget to help NPOs in the media sector with some sort of relief.
6. That all relief measures afforded to SMMEs are extended to the NPOs such as the AIP
7. The SETAs that are funding the sector on a project basis also work on a relief fund for NGOs that work with them

### **About AIP**

Association of Independent Publishers (AIP) is a membership association that represents grassroots community newspapers (both online and print). There are over 200 AIP members that publish over 7 million copies per month (reaching close to 28 million readers). Over 70% of our publishers are black and our publications service the most rural parts of the country.

AIP member publications are distinct from mainstream media owned by large media groups like Media 24, Sekunjalo, Caxton Group and Tiso Blackstar. Members publish primarily in rural areas and disadvantaged communities, in a diverse range of languages and service a diverse range of interests.

85 members publish in a combination of English, Afrikaans and a local language. 78% of publications are black owned with 28% owned by women.

Our geographical communities range from rural Cofimvaba to the urban people of Bonteheuwel, Heideveld and the Cape Flats; from Makhado to Gansbaai; Mangaung to Jozini and many more in between.

Regards

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Carol Mohlala  
Executive Director

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