

*African Institute for Democratic  
Deliberation & Action  
(AIDDA)* **AIDDA**  
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21 March 1999

Ms Marjorie Roman Salas  
Secretary, Federal Communications Commission  
The Portals, 445 12th Street SW  
Washington DC, 20554

Dear Ms Salas,

**Re: In the matter of Application of AfriSpace Inc. for Authority to Launch and Operate a Satellite Sound Broadcasting Transmission System, File no. CSS-90-017 [IBFS file no. SAT-LOA-19900723-00002]; Amendment file no. SAT-AMD-19990125-00016 (Call Sign 52367)**

The African Institute for Democratic Deliberation and Action, AIDDA, is dedicated to reflection and practice regarding the problems and possibilities raised by transitional democracy on the African continent. As such, our primary concern is with the creation of space for public debate and education in relation to these issues. In particular we are concerned with the establishment of fora which reach beyond urban and elite populations, and which operate outside the governmental sphere.

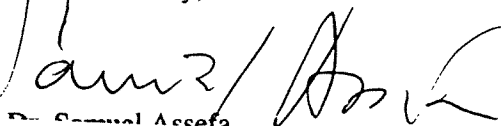
As a consequence of this, AIDDA perceives the current crisis of inaccessibility of the rural majority to information and debate regarding transitional democracy - and many other issues - as the fundamental obstacle to the development of its work.

In the light of this AIDDA views the proposal of AfriSpace for the provision of radio programming to Africa via satellite as uniquely placed to contribute to the establishment of infrastructure which will facilitate widespread public understanding and debate regarding issues of critical and universal importance.

For this reason, AIDDA urges the Federal Communications Commission to give favourable consideration to the Application of AfriSpace for authority to construct, launch, and operate a Sub-regional Africa and Middle Eastern Satellite Sound Broadcasting Transmission System.

Please do not hesitate to contact AIDDA at the address detailed above should you require additional information or confirmation.

Yours sincerely,

  
Samuel Assefa