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Addis Ababa - Ethiopia - P.O. Box 60039 - Tel. 51 33 30 Telex 21224

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22 March 1999

Ms. Marjorie Roman Salas  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
The Portals  
445-12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Amendment of AfriSpace, Inc.'s Application for Authority to Construct, Launch and Operate a Subregional Africa and Middle Eastern 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)

Dear Ms. Salas:

The Pan African News Agency (PANA), established in 1961, is an official information project aimed at strengthening regional integration in the African continent. PANA is formally recognized by leading international and continental organizations, such as UNESCO and UNDP. Out of the 51 member states of the OAU, 48 countries are signatory members of PANA. A leading object of PANA is to assist African news agencies to develop and upgrade their technical and professional capabilities.

On behalf of PANA, I wish to express my support for the AFRISPACE application for a satellite delivered radio broadcasting system. I have been familiar with the AfriSpace project to provide a satellite radio broadcasting system covering Africa and the Middle East since 1990. I have followed the project since that time, including the successful launch of the AfriStar satellite. I believe the AfriSpace project is much needed and would like to take this opportunity to express my full support for it.

PANA is acutely aware of the importance of introducing new technologies into developing areas of the world. The footprint of the AfriStar satellite will enable it to reach exactly populations that are most in need of access to information. The superior quality of the direct broadcast signal in comparison with the currently used short wave

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and the vast coverage area of the system mean that news, information, educational programming and entertainment will be available to a much larger population than is the case with current broadcasting technology. In addition, AfriStar will provide African and Middle Eastern broadcasters with access to the orbital spectrum, resulting in a balanced flow of cultural programming. This factor is of particular importance in Africa where intra-national, international and interregional communication is weak and needs to be brought up to par in order to meet the complex requirements for development. The opportunities that will be available to local broadcasters will also create increased job opportunities both for educational and entertainment programming.

The AfriSpace proposal is a highly commendable effort to introduce an innovative technology in the service development. I support it without reservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Amaha Fesseha'.

Amaha Fesseha  
Deputy Director