



WORLDSPACE  
FOUNDATION

Received

APR 21 1999

Satellite Policy Branch  
International Bureau

April 7, 1999

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APR 07 1999

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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

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).

Dear Ms. Roman Salas:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Worldspace Foundation, a U.S.-based, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization created in 1997. Our mission is to help improve the lives of disadvantaged persons in developing regions of the world by providing access to education and other development-related information that will be broadcast directly to radios from satellites. The WorldSpace Foundation operates independently from the WorldSpace Corporation. It has its own board of directors, its own staff and serves exclusively nonprofit purposes. We are writing in support of AfriSpace Inc.'s request to the Federal Communications Commission for authority to launch and operate the AfriStar<sup>TM</sup> satellite sound broadcasting transmission system.

WorldSpace Foundation is beginning its work in Africa with the development of the Africa Learning Channel (ALC), which will be broadcast on the AfriStar<sup>TM</sup> satellite. The ALC is a vehicle for non-commercial digital radio programming that spans the African continent in support of our mission. When ALC begins broadcasting later this year, it will be the very first time in history that vast numbers of people in the most remote parts of Africa will have access to information and education addressing their most pressing social and economic development needs and improving their quality of life. Our work to make education and information readily accessible to all Africans is very much in line with President Clinton's pledge to work in partnership with Africa to promote democracy, and to assist with social and economic development.

The Africa Learning Channel will be the vehicle for enabling access to information for all Africans, regardless of economic status or geographic barriers. ALC programming will be delivered via satellite digital radio technology: modern technology that is highly appropriate to the oral traditions of Africa. The need for the Africa Learning Channel could not be greater or more urgent. Half of Africa's primary school-age children are not in school, and less than half of those entering first grade will complete primary education. Due to this lack of access to education and even basic information, infant mortality rates in Africa are almost twice those found in Asia and Latin America,

1730 RHODE ISLAND AVENUE, NW

SUITE 1200, WASHINGTON, DC 20036

T: 202-861-2261 F: 202-861-6407

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APR 07 1999

Ms. M. Roman Salas  
April 7, 1999  
Page Two

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and AIDS is expected to decrease life expectancy in some African countries by as much as twenty years by 2000.

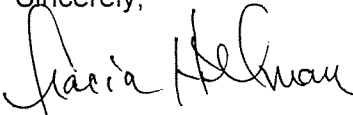
WorldSpace Foundation is developing the ALC in partnership with numerous organizations, including several national groups headquartered in the U.S. that provide educational, social development and other direct services to Africa. Also working with us are UN agencies and over 60 indigenous African education entities. Given the desperate need for this type of expanded education and information service, WorldSpace Foundation supports satellite radio digital broadcast technology, the AfriStar™ satellite in particular, and AfriSpace Inc.'s application to the FCC.

An effort as simple as broadly providing knowledge to an information-starved people can help promote stable democracies and increase the effectiveness of social development programs. In a world that is becoming increasingly interdependent, educating people on one continent will have a significant and positive impact worldwide, reducing threats to the global economy and the spread of life threatening diseases such as AIDS.

We urge the FCC to grant the AfriSpace application and issue it a private international satellite license.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this letter.

Sincerely,



Gracia Hillman  
President and CEO