

The Media Institute

FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

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April 28, 1999

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

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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-19990125-000016 (Call Sign 52367)**

The Media Institute wishes to extend its support for approval of the AfriSpace System which will provide satellite sound broadcasting to Africa and the Middle East.

The Media Institute was established in Kenya in 1996 for the purposes of advancement of freedom of expression in Kenya and the East African region which, like most of Africa, suffers from enormous obstacles to information flow. Part of our mandate is media monitoring, advocacy and defence of freedom of expression. The Institute is a member of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), which groups 35 leading freedom of expression groups around the world.

The Media Institute is pleased that the Afrispace system offers a real opportunity to overcoming the barriers to communication and information flow within and outside the continent. We, like many of the organisations we monitor, are extremely delighted at the prospect of utilising the AfriSpace system to advance our activities. The AfriSpace System will be useful in disseminating information across the borders to other African countries, thereby enhancing universal access to information and advocacy activities. The AfriSpace System will enable local and restricted broadcasters to provide national and continental coverage that is not possible using traditional terrestrial broadcasting technology.

It represents an important step for organisations such as The Media Institute that seek to improve the status of the media. We are optimistic that you will take this into account when reviewing the AfriSpace application and that you will approve its use for the good of the information-starved peoples of Africa.

With kind regards,

David Makali
Programs Director