



SEYCHELLES BROADCASTING CORPORATION

P.O.Box 321, Hermitage, Mahe, Republic of Seychelles
Tel: (+248) 4289 600, Fax: (+248) 4225641, Email: ceo@sbc.sc

Please address all correspondence to the Chief Executive Officer

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The Editor
Seychelles Nation

The SBC's policies on Political Press Conference and Airtime Quota for Political Parties are sincere endeavours aimed at supporting our developing democracy

Dear Editor,

I write in reference to the 'Op-Ed' in the edition of Friday 01st April of the Seychelles Nation, entitled "*Never start something you cannot stop.*"

This title is a giveaway of the negative mindset of the supposedly enlightened 'Newcaster'. I personally prefer less defeatist mantras, such as: "*In the end, the only people who fail are those who do not try.*"

As a 'Newcaster' the writer should have been aware that both endeavours, airtime for political programmes and political press conferences, are guided by clearly written policies. These documents are on our *Public Documents* page of our website (www.sbc.sc).

'Newcaster' should also know that the *Airtime for Political Programmes* was a proposal put forward by politicians themselves in a meeting with the Electoral Commission in 2019, and which the SBC attended.

I paste below the Introduction in the policy on Airtime Quota for Political Parties:

"The National Broadcaster has a key role to play in supporting the advancement of our democracy. Helping to ensure an informed and engaged electorate is derived from the SBC's mandates. By providing free airtime quota to each **registered political party**, the SBC is seeking to further enhance its contributions to our democracy. The quota ensures a baseline equal access on the National Broadcaster's platform to each party, in line with our obligation to provide a platform for 'divergent views'."

Regarding *Political Press Conferences*, I share part of the section on Live Political Press Conferences:

"Freedom of expression normally comes with responsibilities. And in the case of a Live Political Press Conference, this responsibility falls largely on the requestee and their nominated speakers who hold the legal and moral responsibility to speak the truth, to avoid hate speech, not to incite hatred and discord, and to not cause undue offence or harm to others.

When any entity or a Political Party provides a recorded programme for broadcast, for example a Political Party Broadcast, the programme is reviewed to ensure that it meets all of the SBC's



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Please address all correspondence to the Chief Executive Officer editorial requirements. Since this is not possible with live broadcasts, the SBC will ensure an ongoing editorial review of such live press conference.

If it is subsequently deemed that the Corporation's editorial and ethical principles are continually and/or unduly being breached, the Corporation will not approve any further live broadcasts for that particular entity."

We hope that the above narratives have helped answered some of the questions of the writer, if indeed that is what he/she sought...

Allowing Tom, Dick and Harry, as the writer has put it, or better put; our compatriots, better access to the National Broadcaster's platform *is* democracy.
Enabling respect and tolerance for other people's views and standpoints *is* democratic.

If the individuals and parties making use of the SBC's platforms do not use it respectfully and breach our policies, and are curtailed as a result, that is *their* missed opportunity to make a positive contribution.

Opinion is often referred to as the lowest form of human knowledge; it requires no accountability, no understanding, nor facts. Your contributor has not espoused any of these on this particular issue.

The writer has disparaged the SBC Board, unfairly, in my view. None of the Board members have professed to be media gurus. All of the Board members have professed to care about the progress of our National Broadcaster, the development of our democracy, thence our country.

That such an ill-informed rant by an anonymous individual makes front page of your esteemed newspaper as an 'Op-Ed/*Analysis*' is cause for concerns, notably on the standards being espoused, in enabling a person to hide behind anonymity, whilst denigrating well-meaning individuals who are trying to make a positive contribution for their country.

As the Chairman of our Board of Directors has asserted in his Statement in the recently published *SBC Report 2017-2021*:

"Apart from the broad experience base that each member has brought to the table, I believe the one single factor which makes this Board functional and proactive is the fact that most members volunteered for the task and took on their responsibilities of their own free will.

This Board has been passionate about its work. It has been steadfast in its principles and has not been swayed from its mandate."

Sincerely,

Bérard Duprès
Chief Executive Officer
Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation