



TTPBA Comments on Draft Broadcast Code July 2008

For Immediate Release

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The Trinidad and Tobago Publishers and Broadcasters Association (TTPBA) has today submitted further comments and recommendations with respect to the proposed Broadcast Code.

In its current form, the proposed Code does much more than prescribe conduct for concessionaires – its provisions are so far reaching that in some instances they appear to fetter fundamental rights and freedoms to which we are entitled. This was clearly not the intention of the Parliament when the Telecommunications Act was passed in 2001. And further, there can be no justification for such provisions in a Code in a country that prides itself as a thriving democracy.

In order to ensure that there is a balance between the rights of concessionaires and the interests of the public, the TTPBA has made several recommendations, all of which are founded on the guaranteed rights of freedom of the press and freedom of thought and expression and further, proposed amendments that will auger to the benefit of the entire society without any compromise of due process or the principles of natural justice.

The proposed Code must itself reflect a proper respect for the rights and freedoms of our society and so in its attempt to regulate the industry there must be no real or apparent compromise of the duty of broadcasters to safeguard and promote the diversity of our cultural expressions.

The Authority is being encouraged to adopt a hybrid process involving elements of self-regulation and co regulation. Through this process the Authority will set standards for conduct which must be met by each concessionaire. The methodology and mechanism for compliance will be determined by the concessionaire and approved and monitored by the Authority.

TTPBA is confident that the Telecommunication Authority will give meaningful consideration to its proposals and that discussions between the Authority and TTPBA will ensue in order to resolve the matters raised in the submission and also address issues as ventilated in the public consultations on the proposed Code.