

**PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO: 3177**

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**QUESTION PAPER NO: 33**

**Ms D Kohler (DA) to ask the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies:**

What are the reasons that the SA Broadcasting Corporation did not cover the Comrades Marathon on 28 August 2022?

NW3889E

**REPLY:**

**I have been informed by the SABC as follows:**

In 2019 the SABC entered into a year-long contract with Athletics South Africa (ASA). This lapsed amid the COVID-19 pandemic. During negotiations for a new ASA agreement, including securing the rights to broadcast the Comrades Marathon, the SABC learnt that ASA had already signed an exclusive contract with SuperSport for all premium ASA content, including the Comrades Marathon. This is despite the public broadcaster being open to negotiating a non-exclusive deal with ASA - allowing maximum rights revenue for the federation while ensuring most South Africans had access to premium athletic events.

The only recourse thereafter was for the SABC to sublicense these premium events from SuperSport. However, SuperSport's initial terms were unacceptable to the SABC as it wanted the public broadcaster to only broadcast the event a week after the event. After further negotiations it was eventually agreed, through ASA, that the highlights could be flighted within a few hours after the event. Also, the SABC would gain access to live coverage of the start and end of the Comrades Marathon as well as live updates. SuperSport further insisted on including clauses that severely limited where and how the SABC could broadcast the event, including a prohibition on carrying the content on the SABC Sports Channel (across all platforms).

SuperSport had previously tried to insert similar clauses in other sublicense agreements offered to the SABC and which were rejected. Consequently, SuperSport's actions forced the SABC to lodge a complaint of anti-competitive behaviour to the Competition Commission. The Competition Commission is currently dealing with the matter.

**Authorised for submission by**

**MR TINYIKO NGOBENI**

**DIRECTOR-GENERAL (ACTING)**

**DATE:**

**Recommended/not recommended**

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**HON. PHILLY MAPULANE, MP**

**DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES**

**DATE:**

**Approved/ not approved**

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**HON. KHUMBUDZO NTSHAVHENI, MP**

**MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES**

**DATE:**