



**UGANDA
COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION**

BROADCASTING STANDARDS

OO17/002

STANDARDS FOR BROADCAST PROGRAMMES IN UGANDA

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PROGRAMME STANDARDS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Standard outlines the general standards to be observed for broadcasting in the Republic of Uganda. It is the responsibility of broadcasters to ensure that their programmes and services (whether analogue or digital) comply fully with the Standard.

The provisions set out in this Standard have to be applied in spirit and should be read in conjunction with applicable legislation and license conditions especially the Minimum Broadcasting Standards as laid out in section 31 of the Uganda Communications Act 2013, Schedule 4.

2.0 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Programmes should not undermine public security interest or public confidence in the law and its enforcement in Uganda.
2. Matters pertaining to race and religion should be handled sensitively.
3. Broadcasters should be vigilant against the likely effects of all television material on children. It is therefore necessary for broadcasters to exercise considered judgement on the capacity of children, in different age groups, to cope with the depiction and treatment of material which may not be suitable for them.
4. Children's programmes should be wide-ranging in genre and content, but should avoid gratuitous scenes of violence, horror or sex. There should be a balanced mix of programmes to cater for the needs of children of different age groups.
5. Programmes with horror and supernatural content should be broadcast in timeslots that are less accessible to children.
6. Broadcasters should provide advisory notices for programme content which may be potentially disturbing or upsetting so as to enable viewers to make an informed choice.
7. Programmes on crime and violence should not be treated in a cynical, frivolous or callous manner. Such programmes should not incite, glamorize or in any way promote violence or other types of anti-social behavior.
8. Content pertaining to sex and nudity (including programmes on AIDS, sex education, childbirth, etc.) should be treated with discretion and due consideration so as not to offend against good taste and decency.
9. Factual programmes such as news, current affairs or documentary programmes should present information in an objective, accurate and balanced manner.

3.0 PROTECTION OF PUBLIC AND NATIONAL INTEREST

1. Broadcasting programmes should not:
 - i. promote values and attitudes which are contrary to national interest;
 - ii. present information or events in a manner likely to mislead or cause alarm to the public;
 - iii. contain propagandist and ideological messages on behalf of any, group, organization or foreign country;
 - iv. contain extremist or anarchic messages, including the incitement of violence for political ends or other purposes; or
 - v. Sensationalize the treatment of any issue whether local, nationalistic or foreign in nature.
2. Broadcasters must ensure that due impartiality is observed in programmes dealing with matters of public policy or controversial issues of public importance in Uganda.
3. Broadcasters must ensure that where a broadcast relates to national security, the contents of the broadcast are verified before broadcasting.

4.0 FAMILY VIEWING POLICY

It is the Commission's aim to ensure that unsuitable material for children is not broadcast at times when there may be a large audience of young viewers.

Family Viewing Policies

1. All programmes broadcast between 6am and 10pm must be suitable for family audiences. The transition from family-oriented to more adult programming after the watershed period (time after 10pm) should also be executed gradually.
2. The transition to more adult material must not be unduly abrupt at the watershed (in the case of television) or after the time when children are particularly likely to be listening (in the case of radio). For television, the strongest material should appear later in the schedule.
3. Consumer advice like warnings, labelling, classification details and other information announcements should be sufficient and reliable and given prior to telecast of the programme or its trailer. However, this does not diminish the licensee's responsibility for sensitive scheduling of programmes to reduce the risk of causing offence.

Programmes requiring Parental Guidance

4. Programmes that are rated PG usually contain themes and content which may not be suitable for children. These programmes should only be aired between 10pm and 6am. PG-rated programmes, may be aired before 10pm, but should be scheduled in appropriate timeslots. In addition, programmes rated PG should also be accompanied on screen before the start of the programme by a viewing advisory describing the principal elements which have contributed to the rating, including their intensity and/or frequency (e.g. "Due to strong violence/frequent horror scenes etc, parental guidance is

advised.”). This description should be clearly worded and displayed in a readily legible typeface that should remain visible for at least 5 seconds.

5. For all PG rated programmes, a warning indicator should be superimposed at the top left-hand corner of the screen at the beginning of the programme and after every commercial break for one minute.
6. To provide more information to viewers, broadcasters are encouraged to include the relevant viewing advisory beside programmes rated PG in publicity materials (like the TV page in newspapers and TV guides), such as: PG13 [Mature Themes] PG13 [Horror] PG13 [Violence] Trailers and Programme Promotions.
7. Trailers of programmes should be prepared with care and sensitivity based on target audience and broadcast time, and in compliance with the guidelines stipulated in the Advertising standard.

5.0 CHILDREN’S PROGRAMMES

Children may not be able to distinguish real life from fiction, and are likely to be disturbed by the realistic portrayal of violence, horror etc. They are also more predisposed to imitative behaviour. As such, no advantage should be taken of children’s natural credulity.

For the purpose of this section, “children” refers to persons aged 18 years and below.

Range and Quality of Children’s Programmes

1. Children’s programmes should be wholesome and in general designed to impart a broader knowledge of the world around them, and to promote appreciation of good social and moral values. Stories must generally reflect respect for law and order, parents, elders and fellow human beings. Stories should clearly portray good morals e.g. heroic and villainous characters must be distinguishable, and the lifestyles of gangs and gangsters should not be portrayed as desirable.
2. Programmes should not contain scenes depicting the consumption of liquor or tobacco products unless an educational point is being made, or in very exceptional cases if the dramatic context makes it absolutely necessary.
3. The portrayal of any dangerous or harmful behaviour easily imitated by children should be avoided. Swear words should also not be used in such programmes.
4. Animated programmes must avoid excessive violence, especially those featuring humans and life-like characters and depicting realistic story lines. While it is accepted that stylised violence can be entertaining and often humorous in comedy and in animation, more serious representation, for example, in children’s drama, should always be editorially justified and should ensure that the consequences of violence are treated appropriately.
5. Programmes should not be presented in a manner which may be disturbing or distressing to children or which may in any way adversely affect their general wellbeing.

6. Programmes for younger children require special care as they may find violence and horror scenes/programmes in both realistic and fantasy settings to be disturbing. For programmes which may be frightening to preschoolers, broadcasters should provide an advisory to alert parents.

6.0 PUBLIC MORALS & SOCIAL VALUES

1. Broadcasters should bear in mind the importance of the family as the basic unit of society in Uganda. The sanctity of marriage should be respected, and divorce should not be treated casually or in a frivolous manner. Adultery, cohabitation and promiscuity should not be endorsed, glamorized or encouraged.
2. Programmes should not make careless references to any class or group of persons as being inherently inferior. Programmes should not encourage or in any way discriminate against any section of the community on account of gender, age, disability or occupational status.
3. Behaviour such as smoking and alcoholism should not be presented as glamorous or desirable, especially in local programmes.
4. Broadcasters should be mindful of social and cultural sensitivities.
5. Information, themes or subplots on lifestyles such as homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, transsexualism, transvestism, pedophilia and incest should be treated with utmost caution. Their treatment should not in any way promote, justify or glamorize such lifestyles. Explicit dialogue or information concerning the above topics should not be broadcast.

7.0 THEMES

1. The theme (subject matter or topic) and message are important in the classification of a programme. The acceptability of a theme is determined by its suitability and treatment, i.e. the way it is presented and the context in which scenes are presented. Suitability and treatment of a theme is especially important for the lower classification ratings as they have an impact on the young.

8.0 SEX AND NUDITY

Sex

1. The level of sexual activity allowed in a programme depends on the explicitness and frequency of the activity, its relevance to the storyline and the target audience. Generally, depictions of sexual activity are not allowed for G, and PG -rated programmes, while for other programmes may contain implied sexual activity, but should be infrequent and brief.
2. Programmes likely to encourage deviant sexual activities such as pedophilia, bestiality and necrophilia are not allowed for all ratings.
3. Content considered to be pornographic or obscene in nature is not allowed for all ratings.
4. The inclusion of sexual matters in programmes must be defensible in context and presented with tact and discretion. Sexually suggestive or lewd dialogue

and innuendoes should not be broadcast. Sexual stereotyping which can be hurtful and / or demeaning must be avoided.

5. The broadcast of topics related to sex should be targeted at appropriate audiences and scheduled accordingly to reach its intended listeners.
6. Programmes on sex education should be mindful of the target audience. They should not be presented in a sensational or exploitative manner, nor should they encourage or promote sexual permissiveness, promiscuity or unnatural sex acts.

The coverage of sexual and other offences involving Children

7. Where statutory or other legal restrictions apply preventing personal identification, broadcasters should also be particularly careful not to provide clues which may lead to the identification of those who are not yet and who are, or might be, involved as a victim, witness, defendant or other perpetrator in the case of sexual offences featured in criminal, civil or family court proceedings:
 - i. by reporting limited information which may be pieced together with other information available elsewhere, for example in newspaper reports (the 'jigsaw effect');
 - ii. inadvertently, for example by describing an offence as "incest"; or
 - iii. in any other indirect way.

Nudity

8. Nudity is not allowed for a G rating. Rear nudity is allowed in PG-rated programmes if it is discreet, justified by context and not meant to titillate. Side nudity in a non-sexual context is allowed under PG13.
9. Nudity featured in health programmes such as breast-feeding can be rated PG depending on its portrayal and treatment. Top frontal nudity may be allowed only under exceptional circumstances and in a non-sexual context. For example, some nudity may be appropriate and may be shown in programmes which feature historical or dramatised events such as the World War II Holocaust, tribal ways of life, or health programmes on breast feeding and breast cancer.

9.0 VIOLENCE, CRIME & DRUG USE

Violence

1. Suggestions that justice can be achieved by violence, vigilante action or other means of taking law enforcement into one's own hands should be avoided. Any exceptions must take into account the context and redeeming values.
2. The depiction of violence may frighten, unnerve, unsettle or invite imitation, especially from children. Therefore, only mild portrayals that are relevant to the plot may be allowed in programmes meant for children.
3. The concerns in violence are:
 - i. Depiction of graphic/gratuitous violence
 - ii. Normalising the use of violence as a solution to resolve problems;

- iii. Depiction of violent gangster behaviour (e.g. self-mutilation rites);
 - iv. Emphasis on violent techniques/acts (e.g. methods of torture, gangfights, combat techniques)
 - v. Encouraging aggressive and sadistic attitudes towards infliction of pain and violence;
 - vi. Explicit and prolonged sexual violence or erotic portrayal of sexual assault /coercion.
4. Mild portrayals of violence are allowed for a G rating, provided the portrayal does not include dangerous or harmful behaviour that can be easily imitated by children. Moderate portrayals of violence without detail are allowed in PG-rated programmes if justified by context, and if the portrayals of violence do not dwell on cruelty, infliction of pain or torture of any kind. The portrayals of violence can include some infliction of pain and injury but should not be detailed, intense or prolonged.

Crime

- 5. Programmes should not glamorise or in any way promote persons (e.g. gangsters, vandals, delinquents etc.) groups or organisations who use or advocate the use of violence or engage in any criminal activity within Uganda or elsewhere.
- 6. Broadcasters should not broadcast any information from any source which could endanger lives or prejudice the success of attempts to deal with any crime such as hijacking or kidnapping.
- 7. In programmes dealing with criminal activities, whether in fiction or a documentary, there may be conflict between the demands of realism and the risk of unintentionally assisting the criminally inclined. Careful thought should be given and, where appropriate, advice taken from the police, before information is given about law-breaking or methods/techniques countering law enforcement or other security measures.
- 8. Care needs to be taken in programmes to avoid any impression that illegal drugs and substance abuse are socially acceptable, glamorous, or harmless. Detailed depiction of methods of illegal drug-taking should be avoided.
- 9. No payment, promise of payment, or payment in kind, may be made to convicted or confessed criminals whether directly or indirectly for a programme contribution by the criminal (or any other person) relating to his/her crime/s. The only exception is where it is in the public interest

Drug Use

- 10. Clear, instructive details are not allowed in G, and PG content as they can be imitated by the younger audience. Portrayals glamorising or encouraging the use of illegal drugs are not allowed for all ratings.

10.0 GAMBLING & ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Broadcasters must take into account the potential cumulative effect of programme content normalising anti-social behaviour of gambling, as regular

and recurrent portrayals of such content may lead viewers to become more callous about anti-social behaviour of gambling.

Gambling

1. Programmes depicting gambling or the use of gambling devices should be presented with discretion and in a manner that does not encourage or offer instruction to viewers. Gambling programmes/segments are acceptable only if it is relevant to the development of the plot or as an appropriate background to the story.
2. The broadcast of all forms of gambling tips is strictly prohibited. No programme should encourage, promote or in any way offer instruction on gambling even with regard to legitimate forms of gambling.

Anti-Social Behaviour

3. Glorification of gangs and secret societies should be avoided.
4. Hooliganism, vandalism, juvenile delinquency and the lifestyle of deviant sub-cultures should not be glamorised or presented in a favourable light.

11.0 HORROR, SUPERNATURAL, FORTUNE TELLING & OTHER BELIEFS

1. Classification of programmes with horror elements should take into consideration the impact and shock effect of such films to ensure that younger audiences are protected from disturbing materials.
2. The treatment of horror for G-rated content should not be too realistic or threatening, and such scenes should also be mild and not psychologically disturbing. PG-rated programmes should not contain frightening sequences that are prolonged or intense. Belief in superstition should not be promoted.

Occult and 'Psychic' Practices

3. Programmes exploring occult or 'psychic' practices, particularly those with actual demonstrations of exorcisms and occult practices involving supposed contact with spirits or the dead, should be treated with caution.
4. Broadcasters should exercise caution when scheduling fiction programmes which focus on 'psychic' or supernatural phenomena. Programmes of this nature should be scheduled after 10pm, especially in instances where the treatment or presentation of such themes is dark and frightening for younger viewers.

Fortune Telling & Other Beliefs

5. Programmes based on or pertaining to fortune-telling, palm reading, numerology, mind-reading, astrology, new age healing and the like should not give the impression that these practices are exact sciences.

12.0 NEWS, CURRENT AFFAIRS AND OTHER FACTUAL PROGRAMMES

1. The following rules shall apply to the treatment of all news and/or current affairs content.

Fairness, Objectivity and Impartiality -

i. Every broadcaster shall ensure that—

- (a) all news broadcast by the broadcaster is reported and presented in an objective and impartial manner and without any expression of the broadcaster's own views,
 - (b) the broadcast treatment of current affairs, including matters which are either of public controversy or the subject of current public debate, is fair to all interests concerned and that the broadcast matter is presented in an objective and impartial manner and without any expression of his or her own views, except that should it prove impracticable in relation to a single broadcast to apply this paragraph, two or more related broadcasts may be considered as a whole, if the broadcasts are transmitted within a reasonable period of each other,
- ii. A broadcaster shall ensure that the broadcast treatment of any proposal, being a proposal concerning policy as regards broadcasting, which is of public controversy or the subject of current public debate, which is being considered by the Government or the Minister, shall be reported and presented in an objective and impartial manner.
 - iii. A right of reply or an opportunity to respond shall be granted to the Government or its agencies, to correct mistakes, wrongful reporting or misrepresentations. For private individuals and groups, an opportunity to respond should be considered on the merits of each case. The Commission shall direct a broadcaster to give an aggrieved party the opportunity to respond over an appropriate medium.
 - iv. Significant errors in factual programmes such as news, current affairs and documentary programmes should be corrected and broadcast at the earliest opportunity.

2. In their treatment of news and current affairs content broadcasters shall comply with the following principles as articulated in this standard:

- Fairness;
 - Objectivity & Impartiality;
 - Accuracy & Responsiveness;
 - Transparency & Accountability.
3. A broadcaster shall deal fairly with contributors to current affairs content or with persons or organizations referred to in that content.
 4. In the normal course of events, interviewees for news and current affairs content shall be made generally aware of the subject matter and the nature and format of their contribution, so that their agreement to participate constitutes informed consent.
 5. A broadcaster shall not generally broadcast any news or current affairs interview with any person without the consent of that person. The broadcast of any news or current affairs content in the absence of consent must be editorially justified. Requests for withdrawal of consent shall be given due consideration by the broadcaster, having regard to the public interest, natural justice and the principles of fairness, objectivity and impartiality.
 6. Broadcasters shall ensure that morbid, sensational or alarming details not essential to factual reporting are avoided. Images that may seriously distress or offend like dead bodies should only be displayed in clear public interest.
 7. Care shall always be taken with the inclusion of interviews with children or vulnerable people in news or current affairs content. In all cases, the over-riding principle must be to avoid the broadcast of material that may be unfair or detrimental to their interest.

The consent of a parent, guardian or legal representative shall generally be obtained prior to the broadcast of any interview with a child less than 16 years of age or a vulnerable person, where the subject matter is of a sensitive or serious matter or where not to do so could be deemed unfair. A decision to broadcast an interview in the absence of such consent must be justified in the public interest.

8. Where a person or organization refuses to contribute to news and current affairs content or chooses to make no comment, the broadcast shall make this fact clear and shall report in a reasonable manner the person/organization's explanation for declining to

participate, where not to do so could be deemed unfair.

9. The refusal of a person or organization to participate will not preclude the broadcast of news and current affairs content. However, the broadcaster has a responsibility to reflect, as far as practicable, the views of the absent party and to do so fairly.
10. The editing process shall not distort the context or meaning of the original interview.
11. A broadcaster shall ensure that the re-use of any material in a news and current affairs context, including the use of archive material, does not create unfairness or result in inaccuracies.
12. Broadcasters should not give undue prominence to the views and opinions of particular persons or bodies on matters of political, industrial controversy or matters pertaining to current public policy in all factual programmes. Undue prominence is a significant imbalance of views aired within coverage of matters of political, industrial controversy or matters relating to current public policy.
13. The re-construction or re-enactment of an event in news or current affairs content shall be clearly identified as such and should be authentic in its depiction of the event(s) in question.
14. Dramatized reconstructions in factual programmes that seek to reconstruct actual events as a means of obtaining greater authenticity should not distort key reality issues or lead to fictional elements being misleadingly presented as fact.
15. The use of secret or undisclosed recording or filming in current affairs content shall only be used in exceptional circumstances. It must be warranted and a broadcaster shall have appropriate procedures in place for the authorization of such recordings at the most senior editorial level. Such authorization shall be in writing.

The following considerations are essential elements in determining if secret or undisclosed recording or filming is warranted:

- The item being covered is demonstrably in the public interest and the broadcaster has evidence of matter that merits coverage;
- The co-operation of the subject is unlikely to be forthcoming;

- There is reason to believe that coverage of the subject matter will be frustrated as the content cannot reasonably be obtained by other means.
16. Any person secretly filmed or recorded shall be afforded the opportunity to participate in the news and current affairs content that will include the recording if, in the opinion of the broadcaster, not affording the opportunity to participate would be unfair to that person.
 17. By its nature, a direct unarranged approach (“door-stepping”) to an interviewee may contravene fairness. However, in appropriate circumstances it may be justifiable to dispense with the normal practice of making arrangements for an interview directly with an interviewee, or with a representative, and with suitable notice. “Door-stepping”, may be appropriate in circumstances where:
 - The item being covered is demonstrably in the public interest;
 - The interviewee is unlikely to co-operate if approached in the normal way, and;
 - The approach to the individual(s) is necessary to the authenticity and credibility of the content in question.
 18. Broadcasters shall have in place appropriate policies and procedures for handling contributions via social media.
 19. Any undertaking given to a contributor relating to confidentiality or anonymity shall be clear and be honored. Any associated audio-visual techniques utilized in both filming and editing shall be carefully applied to ensure complete confidentiality is achieved and commitments given are fully honored.
 20. News and current affairs content shall be presented with due accuracy, having regard to the circumstances and the facts known at the time of preparing and broadcasting the content.
 21. Two, or more, related broadcasts may be considered as a whole if the broadcasts are transmitted within a reasonable time period and such links are made clear to the audience.
 22. Views and facts shall not be misrepresented or presented in such a way as to render them misleading. Presenters should be sensitive to the impact of their language and tone in reporting news and current affairs so as to avoid misunderstanding of the matters covered.

23. A significant mistake shall be acknowledged and rectified as speedily as possible, in an appropriate and proportionate manner. A broadcast correction or clarification shall have regard to the time and circumstances of the original broadcast.
24. A news presenter and/or a reporter in a news programme may not express his or her own view on matters that are either of public controversy or the subject of current public debate.
25. It is an important part of the role of a presenter of a current affairs programme to ensure that the audience has access to a wide variety of views on the subject of the programme or item; to facilitate the expression of contributors' opinions – sometimes by forceful questioning; and to reflect the views of those who cannot, or choose not to, participate in content. This being so, a presenter and/or a reporter on a current affairs programme shall not express his or her own views on matters that are either of public controversy or the subject of current public debate such that a partisan position is advocated.
26. 'Personal view' or 'authored' current affairs segments or programmes can be appropriate, subject to normal editorial controls. This does not exempt the segment or programme – or a series of related segments/programmes – from the statutory obligations to be impartial, objective and fair to all interests concerned. Similarly, an "authored" item or programme may be permitted if part of a series of related segments/programmes which, taken together, will discharge the statutory obligations.
27. A 'personal view' or 'authored' programme or segment shall be clearly signaled to the audience at the outset, or in the case of a series of segments or programmes, at the start of each one.
28. Each broadcaster shall have and implement appropriate policies and procedures to address any conflicts of interests that may exist or arise in respect of anyone with an editorial involvement in any news or current affairs content, whether such person works on-air or off-air.
29. Any personal, professional, business or financial interest of anyone with an editorial involvement in news or current affairs content that calls into question (or that might reasonably be perceived as calling into question) the fairness, objectivity or impartiality of a programme or item, shall be brought to the attention of the audience.

To this end, broadcasters shall satisfy themselves that they are in a position to be aware of the relevant interests of the personnel concerned, and to determine whether the interest concerned is of such extent as would warrant the withdrawal of any person from further involvement in the item or programme.

30. Broadcasters and programme makers shall adhere to all legislative requirements when sourcing, compiling, producing and presenting news and current affairs content.

13.0 REALITY, MUSICAL & VARIETY PROGRAMMES

Reality TV

1. As Reality TV may involve the filming of ordinary individuals with or without their consent or in set-up situations, complaints about programme invasion of privacy can arise from the gathering of material or from the way an individual is treated in such programmes. Broadcasters shall only collect material for broadcast purpose by means which are lawful and fair in the circumstances of the case.

Musical & Variety Programmes

2. Films and music videos disallowed under the laws of Uganda should generally not be broadcast. However, if suitable edits can be made, such content may be deemed passable for broadcast. Songs disallowed or otherwise prohibited under the applicable laws and regulations in Uganda must not be aired. Music associated with drugs, alternative lifestyles (e.g. homosexuality) or the worship of the occult or the devil should not be broadcast.
3. Broadcasters must exercise sensitivity and avoid humour which offends good taste and decency. Examples include jokes based on race, gender, disability, as such humour (even without malicious intent) can easily cause hurt or humiliation.
4. It is the responsibility of the broadcaster to ensure that choreographed dance sequences and the appearance of artists should be in good taste and not offend any religion, race or culture. Specifically, entertainment programmes involving children should not be exploitative or distasteful. Care must be taken to ensure that children performing in entertainment programmes are not made to behave inappropriately (e.g. stripping and wearing skimpy clothing).
5. Where a contest is included in a programme, references to prizes must not be made in such a way as to amount to advertising. Aural or visual references to prizes or acknowledgement of the source of prizes are allowed in contests provided that they are not excessive. The presentation of tobacco products as prizes or gifts for contests is not permitted.

14.0 INTERACTIVE SERVICE

Broadcast Competition and Voting

- 1. Meaning of “broadcast competition”:** A competition or free prize draw featured in a programme in which viewers or listeners are invited to enter by any means for the opportunity to win a prize.

Meaning of “voting”:

- 2. Features in a programme in which viewers or listeners are invited to register a vote by any means to decide or influence, at any stage, the outcome of a contest.**
3. Broadcast competitions and voting must be conducted fairly.
4. Broadcasters must ensure that viewers and listeners are not materially misled about any broadcast competition or voting.
5. Broadcasters must draw up rules for a broadcast competition or vote. These rules must be clear and appropriately made known. In particular, significant conditions that may affect a viewer’s or listener’s decision to participate must be stated at the time an invitation to participate is broadcast.
6. Broadcast competition prizes must be described accurately

Contests & Premium Charge Telephone Services

7. If, during a program or program promotion, viewers are invited to use a premium charge telephone service (including SMS) to obtain information, register a view on a matter or participate in a competition, the broadcaster must provide clearly readable information about the cost of the call. If the programme is one that has a substantial child audience, information about the cost of the call must be in a form which children can understand, and must be presented visually and orally. Children must be asked to seek parental permission before calling.

SMS, MMS & Other Interactive Services

8. Locally produced or packaged programmes which allow viewers to interact on-air via short messaging service (SMS) or multimedia messaging service (MMS) are subject to the guidelines in this standard and the following conditions:
 - i. All SMS/MMS should be screened and moderated before broadcast and be in accordance with the guidelines in this standard.
 - ii. The provision, promotion or facilitation of anonymous private chat services or options is not allowed. Even if the broadcaster does not offer an actual private chat service or option, the moderator must screen out all SMS/MMS that solicit private chat among users (e.g., messages that provide users’ personal contact details must be screened out). The programme should also not

be used as a means for soliciting dates among users (e.g., strangers arranging to meet each other at an agreed public place).

15.0 STIMULI BEYOND NORMAL PERCEPTUAL THRESHOLD

Subliminal Messages

1. Broadcasters should not employ the process known as “subliminal perception” or any other techniques or devices (e.g. by using images of very brief duration) which attempts to convey information to the viewer by transmitting messages beyond the normal threshold of awareness.
2. Broadcasters must not use techniques which exploit the possibility of conveying a message to viewers or listeners, or of otherwise influencing their minds without their being aware, or fully aware, of what has occurred.

Flashing Images and Regular Patterns

3. Flashing lights and certain types of regular visual patterns can cause problems for some viewers who have photosensitive epilepsy. Care must be taken to minimize these risks in all programmes, but especially those where young people are likely to be watching as they could be more susceptible.
4. Television broadcasters must take precautions to maintain a low level of risk to viewers who have photosensitive epilepsy. Where it is not reasonably practicable to follow this guidance, and where broadcasters can demonstrate that the broadcasting of flashing lights and/or patterns is editorially justified, viewers should be given an adequate verbal and also, if appropriate, text warning at the start of the programme or programme item.

Hypnotism

5. For any broadcast on demonstration of hypnotism for entertainment, care must be taken to minimize the risk of hypnosis being induced in susceptible viewers. In particular, the hypnotist must not be shown performing straight into the camera.
6. When broadcasting material featuring demonstrations of hypnotic techniques, broadcasters must exercise a proper degree of responsibility in order to prevent hypnosis and/or adverse reactions in viewers and listeners. The hypnotist must not broadcast his/her full verbal routine or be shown performing straight to camera.

16.0 PRESENTATION AND SCHEDULING OF PROGRAMMES

1. Broadcasters must exercise particular care when putting 'live' calls on air especially where topics involved are sensitive ones, and comments made may be derogatory or offensive.
2. Any presentation format which uses fictional personas (masqueraders) to voice distasteful and offensive viewpoints is not acceptable. Broadcasters who adopt such formats will be responsible for all comments made by the fictional personas.

3. Broadcasters should exercise due caution when accepting on-air calls seeking advice. This is especially so when callers seek advice on emotional problems and matters requiring professional assistance since providing the wrong advice may have serious consequences. Broadcasters should refer such callers to the appropriate persons or bodies such as professional counsellors, lawyers and consumers' association advisors.
4. Broadcasters must exercise care and sensitivity when scheduling programmes containing adult content. Such programmes should be placed in timeslots where younger listeners are less likely to be listening.
5. Appropriate scheduling should be judged according to:
 - i. the nature of the content;
 - ii. the likely number and age range of children in the audience, taking into account school time, weekends and holidays;
 - iii. the start time and finish time of the programme;
 - iv. the nature of the channel or station and the particular programme; and
 - v. The likely expectations of the audience for a particular channel or station at a particular time and on a particular day.

17.0 PROGRAMMES SCHEDULE OR PROGRAM LINE UPS AND LOG BOOKS

1. A broadcaster shall forward to the Commission its quarterly programmes schedule/line up and synopses of new or repackaged programmes not less than one week before the beginning of the quarter.
2. A broadcaster shall adhere to its submitted program schedule, in the event of change, adequate prior announcement shall be made.
3. A broadcaster shall maintain log books to record each day's programmes; music; advertisement and sponsorships.

18.0 BROADCAST PROGRAMS SCRIPTS

1. Every Scheduled broadcast item, including spot announcements shall be scripted.
2. The scripts must be approved by the Head of programs who will remain accountable for whatever is broadcast in that program.
3. In case of a news broadcast, the Chief News Editor will be accountable to the Content in the News broadcast.
4. On demand by the Commission, the Station shall produce any script or transcript of the programme.

19.0 FAIRNESS

1. This applies to how broadcasters treat the individuals or organisations directly affected by programmes, rather than to what the general public sees and/or hears as viewers and listeners. This is to ensure that broadcasters avoid unjust or unfair treatment of individuals or organisations in programmes.

Dealing fairly with contributors and obtaining informed consent

2. Broadcasters and programme makers should normally be fair in their dealings with potential contributors to programmes unless, exceptionally, it is justified to do otherwise
3. Where a person is invited to make a contribution to a programme they should normally, at an appropriate stage;
 - i. Be told the nature and purpose of the programme, what the programme is about and be given a clear explanation of why they were asked to contribute and when (if known) and where it is likely to be first broadcast
 - ii. be told what kind of contribution they are expected to make, for example live, pre-recorded, interview, discussion, edited, unedited, etc
 - iii. be informed about the areas of questioning and, wherever possible, the nature of other likely contributions
 - iv. be made aware of any significant changes to the programme as it develops which might reasonably affect their original consent to participate, and which might cause material unfairness
 - v. be told the nature of their contractual rights and obligations and those of the programme maker and broadcaster in relation to their contribution; and
 - vi. be given clear information, if offered an opportunity to preview the programme, about whether they will be able to effect any changes to it.
4. Broadcasters should ensure that the re-use of material, i.e. use of material originally filmed or recorded for one purpose and then used in a programme for another purpose or used in a later or different programme, does not create unfairness. This applies both to material obtained from others and the broadcaster's own material.
5. If a programme alleges wrongdoing or incompetence or makes other significant allegations, those concerned should normally be given an appropriate and timely opportunity to respond.
6. Where a person approached to contribute to a programme chooses to make no comment or refuses to appear in a broadcast, the broadcast should make clear that the individual concerned has chosen not to appear and should give their explanation if it would be unfair not to do so.
7. Where it is appropriate to represent the views of a person or organisation that is not participating in the programme, this must be done in a fair manner.

20.0 OBSERVING THE WATERSHED PERIOD ON TELEVISION

The watershed period means the period of time during which programmes which might be unsuitable for children or contain adult content may be broadcast. In Uganda the watershed period is the time between 10:00pm and 5:00am.

Television broadcasters must comply with rules relating to pre-watershed content particularly material broadcast before and soon after the watershed; and music videos broadcast before the watershed.

Family shows

8. Broadcasters should take particular care when broadcasting pre-watershed programmes broadly identified as “family shows” – whether live or pre-recorded. Whereas some of these programmes are not made for children, they nevertheless tend to attract a significant child audience and therefore broadcasters should ensure that the content is suitable for family viewing throughout the duration of the programme. Particular caution should be applied should the programme continue past the watershed as the family audience is still likely to remain viewing the programme.

Trailers

9. Broadcasters should therefore ensure trailers for post-watershed content scheduled pre-watershed include only content that is appropriate for a pre-watershed audience. Broadcasters should also consider whether the content of a trailer is suitable to be shown pre-watershed if it includes the same images that may warrant a pre-programme warning to viewers before the programme is shown post-watershed.

Soaps

While soaps are not aimed at young people, they are scheduled pre-watershed and often attract a significant child audience.

10. Broadcasters should therefore ensure that material that may be unsuitable for children is appropriately scheduled for the time of broadcast - including any subsequent repeats during the daytime when children may view without a parent or other adult.
11. Broadcasters of pre-watershed soaps should therefore take account of the concerns on violence, sexual content, or offensive language in pre-watershed television programmes when considering whether content is suitable for broadcast before, and/or immediately after, the watershed.

Post-watershed content edited for pre-watershed transmission

Broadcasters should take particular care if they wish to show before the watershed content originally produced for a post-watershed audience. In principle, material which has been previously shown after the watershed can be broadcast during the day and comply with the standards, provided all necessary edits have been made or other necessary measures taken to ensure it is appropriate for a daytime audience, which may include children. Some programmes or content, however, even if rigorously edited or carefully scheduled, may not be suitable for broadcast pre-watershed because of their adult themes or repeated offensive language (even if ‘bleeped’).

12. **Offensive language:** masking offensive language is one way in which broadcasters may edit post-watershed material to make it suitable for broadcast pre-watershed. If the use of the masked offensive language in a programme is frequent, such that the programme requires multiple instances of bleeping, there can be a cumulative effect on viewers similar to that of the offence caused by repeated broadcast of the unedited offensive language. In programmes where there is frequent use of offensive, broadcasters may need either to edit the programmes more rigorously for pre-watershed transmission to take account of this cumulative effect, or consider whether the programme is in fact appropriate for pre-watershed broadcast at all.
13. **Violence:** broadcasters editing post-watershed drama material including violent scenes for pre-watershed transmission should ensure that such scenes are appropriately limited. Particular attention should be paid to scheduling of material in slots when children may reasonably be expected to have returned from school.

Transition to more adult material

14. Broadcasters should take particular care to ensure that material scheduled to start before, but continue past, 10:00pm or 05:30am does not abruptly become unsuitable.
15. Content that commences after the watershed should observe a smooth transition to more adult content. It should not commence with the strongest material.

Music Videos

Appropriate scheduling and context

16. Broadcasters to ensure that children are protected by appropriate scheduling from material that is unsuitable for them. Appropriate scheduling means taking into account as relevant:
 - i. the nature of the content;
 - ii. the likely number and age range of children in the audience, taking into account school time, weekends and holidays;
 - iii. the start time and finish time of the programme;
 - iv. the nature of the channel or station and the particular programme; and
 - v. the likely expectations of the audience for a particular channel or station at a particular time and on a particular day.

Sexual images

17. Broadcasters should take care to avoid any explicit images of sexual behaviour, or images that inappropriately convey a sexualized theme, or any inappropriate cumulative effect resulting from the repetition of these types of images that are unsuitable for children and likely to cause concern to parents.
18. The Commission understands that music videos will rarely contain sexually explicit images, but the cumulative effect of certain images or combination of images can result in material of a sexualised nature in music videos which is unsuitable for child viewers and could cause offence. Intrusive and/or prolonged shots of body parts are likely to increase the overall sexual impact. Any images of this nature broadcast before the watershed in music videos must be editorially justified and appropriately limited.

Clothing

19. It is important to note that in pre-watershed content, viewers would not expect to see singers and dancers wearing clothing that does not adequately cover their bodies (in particular their breasts, genital area and buttocks). Similarly, skimpy clothing while dancing provocatively or adopting a sexual position is likely to offend viewers.
20. Broadcasters should consider whether this kind of clothing, combined with sexual behaviour, results in a strong sexualised theme that may be understood by children or cause concern to parents. Broadcasters should consider the length of shots used and the overriding theme of the music video.

Lyrics

21. Sexual lyrics broadcast in music videos, and such material must be appropriately scheduled. Before the watershed broadcasters should avoid broadcasting lyrics in music videos that clearly focus on sex or convey a clearly sexualised theme.

Dancing

22. Images of provocative or sexualised dancing should be appropriately limited before the watershed.
23. Broadcasters are reminded that intrusive and/or prolonged shots of body parts are likely to increase the overall sexual impact of a music video. Broadcasters are advised that the cumulative effect of the repeated close-up images of the female dancers' buttocks, together with provocative dancing and actions in the video, usually result in the video's imagery conveying a highly sexualised theme.