

## **RESPECTFUL, RESPONSIBLE REPORTING ON ETHNIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA**

**The Defender of the Public, along with organizations that represent and defend the rights of African communities, has produced a document that aims at having a more egalitarian, democratic society through plural communication.**

The organization is convinced that respectfully communicating human rights in a plural way contributes to having a more egalitarian, democratic society. Therefore, it makes the following recommendations:

### **1- Divulge the positive aspects associated to African communities.**

It is suggested promoting an intercultural outlook on Argentina. A democratic, horizontal perspective of the different groups that make up the country contributes to more, better, discrimination-free integration. This outlook is essential to the construction of a plural, egalitarian society. That is why it is necessary to promote visibilization in the media that highlights the positive, productive aspects of African communities and those of African ascent, and to take into consideration their specificities and characteristics.

### **2- Divulge the meanings and implications of the term “of African descent” so that it can be correctly used in the media to refer to these groups.**

Those who work in audiovisual media outlets are advised to bear in mind that the African identity is part of the past, the present and the future of Argentina. Doing so is crucial to avoid seeing Africa as something separate geographically and historically from the make-up of the country. In contrast, it is suggested stressing the important historical role of these communities in the political shaping of Latin America and Argentina as an independent country.

### **3- Visibilize the different cultural and social realities of people who see themselves as of African descent or African living in Argentina.**

It is advised, when referring to African communities and those of African descent, to point out their diversity and heterogeneity, and to make visible each of the collectives that make up these groups. The diversity within African culture is part of the richness and diversity throughout Argentina. Understanding said diversity is learning to respect and acknowledge the collectives.

**4- Avoid associating the word “black” with illegal, clandestine practices, or ideas and descriptions with a negative connotation.**

Audiovisual media may contribute to identifying African communities and thus preserve their self-perceived cultural identity. In this sense, it is advised to avoid using the term “black” to refer to members of African communities, since its use tends to have a discriminatory, negative, imprecise and disrespectful connotation.

**5- Avoid associating African religious practices with negative aspects or crime.**

It is advised that, when reporting on African religious practices, coverage abide by the Law of Cults and resort to religious figures in the African community when in need of legitimate sources of information. It is thus suggested to avoid basing journalistic work on suppositions, prejudice or comments about African religions or creeds, since they usually lead to simplistic, spectacularizing or criminalizing representations of those who practice them.

**6- Take into consideration the legitimacy of different African organizations as sources of information and opinion and to answer queries regarding the topics about which they can provide socially relevant information.**

When reporting on events that involve members of African communities and those of African descent -at a national and international level-, it is advisable to resort to the many African organizations and associations of African descendants in Argentina as sources of information and opinion or to make queries so that they can share their views on the events. The visibilization of their own experiences, which is usually left out of local media reports, tends to silence a significant part of the population. The participation of African communities in the media may contribute to legitimizing their identity as part of the social plurality that they are part of.

**7- Foster the access of African descendants to positions such as anchor, TV show host or producer in audiovisual media.**

The Defender advises public and private audiovisual media outlets to promote employing African descendants. This would counteract media disinformation and the invisibilization of the African community at large.

**8- Promote the inclusion of ethnic and cultural diversity in advertisements and fiction.**

It is encouraged the inclusion of African communities in proposals for audiovisual advertising and fictional content since this would entail, apart from equal recognition, support to inclusive, democratic discourse about the social makeup of the country. In turn, it may also contribute to eliminating the racism that persists in part of the society and in view of which the best response is the integral participation of the plurality that is part of the whole social space.

**9- Visibilize November 8<sup>th</sup> as the “National Day of African Argentines and African Culture” so that it is part of the journalistic agenda.**

It is advised to stress the importance of November 8<sup>th</sup>, the “National Day of African Argentines and African Culture” in Argentina, so as to promote African culture in the country and visibilize its relevance to the historical construction of contemporary national culture and identity. As is stated in Law no. 26,852 of 2013, November 8<sup>th</sup> marks the commemoration of the passing of María Remedios del Valle, “an African Argentine woman known as ‘Founding Mother’, on whom General Manuel Belgrano conferred the title of Captain due to her courage and bravery on the battlefield”. By acknowledging it, not only is African culture vindicated as part of the national culture, but also its contemporary importance.

**10. Promote spaces for public and media discussions so that social diversity can express itself and that Africans or those of African ascent can divulge their realities.**

Given the constant process of making foreign and subordinating what is “black” and “African”, and given the little awareness of the “African Argentine” identity in our country, it is crucial for audiovisual media outlets to generate spaces for discussion and to question different forms of discrimination still present in Argentine society. The social responsibility of the media may contribute to promoting broader, more integrating outlooks and eventually, it will allow those who have kept quiet to demand the exercise of their own right to communication.