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**PRESS STATEMENT
IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MORE ONLINE STREAMING COMPANIES ALIGNING TO SOUTH AFRICAN CONTENT
REGULATION**

21 February 2020, Centurion. The Film and Publication Board (FPB) is delighted to welcome Netflix International onboard licensed online content distributing platforms, following the recent signing of a distribution agreement between both parties.

Netflix joins the likes of Showmax, Google and Apple to become the 9th online distributor to contract with the FPB, ensuring compliance with the Film and Publications Act, and the Classification Guidelines. These Classification Guidelines are aligned with social norms and values as tested with the South African public, aimed at providing advisories and age ratings that protect children and other vulnerable consumers.

Says FPB Acting Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Abongile Mashele: "The signing of this contract is the culmination of a series of discussions on the prioritisation of safe content consumption for our citizens, where materials distributed in the country are accompanied by ratings that prepare the consumer for the type of content they are about to view. This allows parents and caregivers to make informed choices on the content to which their children are exposed."

The Film and Publication Amendment Act requires all distributors of films, games, and certain publications to register with the FPB and ensure that their materials are classified prior to reaching the consumer. The consumer will then see the FPB classification triangle, look out for the age rating (eg: 7-9 PG) as well as the consumer advisory (eg: SV for Sexual Violence) and decide on the suitability of the content for themselves and children in their care.

Film and game distribution models around the world have seen a significant change with the rise of new media platforms such as Over-The-Top services (online streaming). Research from PricewaterhouseCoopers on trends in entertainment and media shows that video content forms the largest share of data consumption by content type in South Africa between 2013 and 2017. As access to digital devices spreads and the possible reduction in data costs in the near future, this trend is likely to continue increasing.



“As a content regulator with its finger on the pulse of the industry, this trend has spurred the FPB on to innovate the way in which we classify content,” Ms. Mashele explains. The FPB combines robust distributor engagements with a focus on creating solutions that address the needs of its clients. “A self-classification system is one that we find works well for online distributors. We have made great strides in bringing more online platforms onboard. However, we live in ever-changing times, and will in future continue to adapt our operating models to ensure advances in technology and distribution have adequate child and consumer protection mechanisms,” Ms. Mashele says.

Following the signing of the distributor contract, FPB will engage Netflix in intensive training on the Classification Guidelines and the methodology of self-classification before the ratings can be applied. Quality Assurance will be done by FPB on classified material and there will be continuous engagement with the Classification Guideline by both parties. The public can rest assured that the films they view on Netflix will be aligned to South African rating standards.

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Editor’s Notes

The Film and Publication Board (FPB) is the regulator of the creation, production, possession and distribution of films, games, certain publications, and more recently certain online content. This is done to provide consumer advice to enable adults to make informed viewing, reading and gaming choices for themselves and children in their care; to protect children from exposure to disturbing and harmful material and from premature exposure to adult experiences, and to make the use of children in, and the exposure of children to pornography, punishable.

Paramount to the mandate of the FPB is the protection of children. Protecting children under the Act is a proportional balancing of the rights afforded in the South African Constitution and Bill of Rights against the right of the child. The protection of children as enshrined in the Constitution and Bill of Rights includes physical, mental, emotional, spiritual or moral harm to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation. It further ensures that children’s best interest is of paramount importance in every matter concerning a child.