



Republic of Zambia
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

**ON THE PROGRESS MADE ON
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DIGITAL MIGRATION
PROJECT**

**PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT BY HON. CHISHIMBA KAMBWILI MP.
MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING SERVICES**

June 2015

Mr. Speaker,

As you are aware, the United Nations International Telecommunication Union (ITU), at its meeting in Geneva in 2006, set 17th June, 2015, as the deadline for countries across the world to migrate from analogue to digital television broadcasting. I now wish to update the House and through you Sir, the people of Zambia, the progress Government has made in that regard.

Phase 1 of the digital migration project has been completed and I take this opportunity to announce that our President, His Excellency Edgar Chagwa Lungu will officially launch Phase 1 of the digital television broadcasting at Mass Media Complex on Monday 22nd June 2015.

Mr. Speaker

Cabinet approved the National Digital Migration Policy on 10 March, 2014 which sets the guidelines of migrating the country's television broadcasting sector from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting.

Following the adoption of this Policy, Government decided to implement the digital migration project in phases; Phase 1 covering the areas along the line of rail from Livingstone in Southern Province to Chililabombwe on the Copperbelt; Phase 2 covers the remaining Provincial Centers and Phase 3 for the rest of the Country. This approach was arrived at to ensure that there was a gradual implementation process and building on the lessons learnt from each phase to the other.

Government on 14th July, 2014, awarded a contract to Star Software Technology Company Ltd of china to implement Phase one (1) of the digital migration project at a cost of nine million five hundred fifty four thousand one hundred twenty four United States dollars **(\$9,554,124.00)**.

The contractor moved on site in December 2014, after all the logistics such as allocation of frequencies, pre-shipment inspections and payment of the 10% advance were done.

Mr. Speaker,

I am happy to announce to this August House that the Contractor has completed installations, testing and we are now in the commissioning phase. Tomorrow 17th June 2015 the digital television broadcasting will start and areas from Livingstone to Chililabombwe will have high quality digital television. This, Mr. Speaker will signal the start of dual casting and in line with the Policy this dual broadcasting of analogue and digital will be for a period of six months after that the analogue signal will be switched off.

To receive digital signal, the public will need to buy a decoder (set-top-box) and these decoders are available for sale in the ZamPost Post offices along the line of rail and later throughout the country. This decoder has been type approved by ZICTA and meet the Zambia Bureau of Standards (ZABS) standard for the Set Top Boxes (STBs). The decoder costs **K130**, and for some people who might require an outdoor aerial, this will cost K80.

Mr. Speaker,

The Policy provides for dealers interested in distribution of decoders to be accredited with ZICTA before being allowed to trade in STBs. This measure has been introduced to protect the Zambian public from buying counterfeit products

Mr. Speaker,

The Policy provides for establishment of a public signal distributor to carry the content for all broadcasters, public and private. However, considering the time required to establish a separate entity, Government decided to designate ZNBC as an interim measure, a public signal distributor and ZICTA has already issued a network licence to ZNBC after the Corporation paid **K928,000** as per licence requirements.

Therefore when the new digital broadcasting signal starts tomorrow, at least four (4) channels; ZNBC's TV1 and TV2, Prime Television and Revelation Television will be accessed as a bouquet. More channels will be included in due course as other broadcasters prepare to take their content to ZNBC. This is one of the benefits of migration which has already started bearing fruit.

The capacity of the Phase 1 network is twenty (20) channels and therefore there is no cause to worry that some private broadcasters will be left out. In addition, all private broadcasters will be carried on the public network for free for a period of six months. This, Mr. Speaker, is a clear demonstration of the Government's unflinching support to promote private business, enhance information flow. However, after the lapse of the six months, broadcasters will be required to pay to the public signal distributor 'carrier fees'. Modalities and tariffs are still being worked out and the public will be informed once this has been concluded.

Mr. Speaker,

With Phase 1 of the project behind us, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry is now working on processes to start implementation of Phases 2 and 3. The Ministry has completed the design and requirement specifications for the two phases and we are now in the process of procurement.

The design of the two phases covers the rest of the country including all the areas where there is no television coverage at the moment. The hard working Government of President Lungu has decided that in Phase 2 and 3 decoders should be sold on cash as well as instalment basis. This will enable everyone to access digital television system.

The scope of works for Phases 2 and 3 will cover transmission system for the remaining sites, studio equipment, Provincial Broadcasting Stations and upgrading of the facilities at ZNBC Lusaka, Kitwe and ZANIS studios. This will be a comprehensive upgrade of television facilities in our country.

Mr. Speaker,

As I conclude, may I inform the House and through you the public that television sets people currently have in their homes will still work under the digital technology. All that will be needed is to connect the television set to a set-top box, or a decoder. Further, starting tomorrow 17th June 2015, there will be simultaneous transmission of analogue and digital signals hence there will be **NO BLACK OUT.**

So, there is absolutely no need for members of the public to panic as to what will happen to the television sets they have.

I thank you.