



MINISTRY
COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL
TECHNOLOGIES, Ms KHUMBUDZO NTSHAVHENI, MP ON THE PROGRESS UPDATE
ON BROADCAST DIGITAL MIGRATION**

07 July 2022, 16h00 PRETORIA – GCIS Tshedimoseetso House

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. On the 24th of June 2022, I updated the nation on the Broadcast Digital Migration (BDM) and Analogue Switch-Off (ASO). At the time of the media briefing, we were awaiting the Constitutional Court ruling on the matter between the Minister and eTV/others.
- 1.2. On the 28th of June 2022, the Constitutional Court handed down a judgement on the matter between eTV/Others and the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies. The Constitutional court set aside the Gauteng high court decision of Switching of analogue by the end of June 2022.
- 1.3. The Constitutional court clarified that it is the Minister power to determine the analogue switch-off date as part of exercising her executive authority (para 33 of judgment). This power is located within the Minister’s original constitutional policy-making powers, which is section 85(2)(c) of the Constitution (para 35). This power was exercised in order to implement BDM Project (para 35);
- 1.4 The ConCourt held that there are constraints that the Minister must consider when exercising her Authority. For the Minister to set the analogue switch-off date, she must

notify the industry and affected parties, and take into account their representations (para 53);

- 1.4. The ConCourt held that the Minister must notify members of the public about the planned analogue switch-off and inform them about a need to register for STBs with a sense of urgency (para 68). Which date may legitimately take into account the opportunities already afforded to qualifying and indigent persons to register.
- 1.5. The ConCourt deemed that it cannot prescribe the procedure that the Minister must follow before determining the analogue switch-off date nor the period for informing the public about the ASO and need to register.
- 1.6. The ConCourt held that Analogue switch-off is an urgent national priority and therefore, once adequate notice is given to the public to make informed decisions on whether to register for an STB, digital migration should proceed without further delay (para 103).

2. STB INSTALLATIONS AND ANALOGUE SWITCH-OFF UPDATE

- 2.1 As previously communicated, the SABC analogue transmission has been switched-off in the five provinces of the Free-State, Northern Cape, North-West, Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces. This enabled Sentech to complete the restacking of spectrum bands for completion of digital migration in the 5 Provinces. Therefore, ICASA is continuing with the release of the auctioned the high Demand spectrum in these 5 provinces in accordance with ICASA plans.
- 2.2 The release of the spectrum in the 5 migrated Provinces will enable the telecommunication network operators to decongest the networks with the deployment of 4G and 5G networks. However, until such time that the ASO is achieved in the provinces of Gauteng, Western Cape, KZN and Eastern Cape, digital migration cannot be completed, and the auctioned spectrum cannot be released.
- 2.3 The Constitutional Court has accepted that subsidized Set-Top-Boxes can only be provided to those who apply and qualify for such assistance.
- 2.4 Against the end of October 2021 registrations, all provinces have been completed except the provinces of KZN and Eastern Cape that were affected by the floods. As of the 30th of June 2022, a total of 94, 113 beneficiary households remain unconnected in the two provinces albeit connections are continuing at a slow pace.

2.5 We commenced with installations for Households that registered by the end of March 2022 in the 5 provinces that have completed installations of 31 October 2021 registrations except Western Cape and North-West are yet to commence.

2.6 To date we have installed STBs to 56,354 households that registered by the end of March 2022 with Free State and Northern Cape already on mop-up stages. We will commence connecting the end of June registrations as and when we complete end of March registrations in provinces.

3. STB REGISTRATIONS

3.1 The total number of households that registered between 1st November 2021 and 31 March 2022 is 260 268. This translates to an average of 52K registrations per month over a 5 months period between November and March.

3.2 The total number of registered households between April 2022 and June 2022 is 49 385, and this translates to an average of 16, 461 registrations per month, therefore representing a decline in STB applications and registrations.

4. WAY FORWARD AND NEXT STEPS

4.1 Tomorrow I will publish through a government gazette a public notice of the 30th of September 2022 as the closing date for applications and registrations for government subsidized set-top boxes for qualifying indigent households. The call for applications for Government subsidized Set-Top-Boxes commenced in October 2015 and I previously set a provisional deadline of 31st October 2021. The 31st of October 2021 deadline was provisional as qualifying households could still apply for STBs after, but the 30th of September 2022 is the final deadline, and no applications will be considered after this date.

4.2 Noting the decline in STB applications and registrations in recent months and comparing the end of October, end of March and end of June registrations, this period is sufficient for the last registrations.

4.3 Through this notice, I am informing members of the public and non-Indigent households who are still watching analogue TV, of my intension to switch-off analogue and urge them to purchase compliant digital television sets from retail market. The compliant digital TV set is identified through the Go-Digital logo.

4.4 The Minister will evaluate the total number of new registrations against the progress with installations and commence consultations with affected parties on the new ASO date.

I Thank you!!!

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