



MINISTRY
COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X860, PRETORIA, 0001 – iParioli Office Park, 1166 Park, Hatfield, PRETORIA
Tel: +27 12 427 8000 – Fax +27 12 427 8016 – Email: Media@DCDT.gov.za URL: www.dcdt.gov.za

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

28 April 2022, 16h00 PRETORIA

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Many developments involving the Broadcast Digital Migration (BDM) and Analogue Switch-Off (ASO) have taken place since our last media briefing on the 24 November 2021 and my SONA debate address on the 15th of February 2022.

1.1.1 The Minister of Communications & Digital Technologies determined and gazetted the 31st of March 2022 as the end of dual illumination period and the Analogue Switch-Off (ASO) date.

1.1.2 The regulator, ICASA successfully concluded the auction of the high demand spectrum, raising the much needed R14.4 billion for the national fiscus. This left the BDM process, particularly the analogue switch-off (ASO) with limited time to conclusion, for the National Treasury to access over R14 billion proceeds of the spectrum auction.

1.1.3 ICASA, announced a transitional period for the broadcasting service licensees and signal distributors to ensure a seamless transition process for the switch-off of the remaining analogue transmitters to end on 30 June 2022.

- 1.1.4 The Gauteng High Court ruled in favour of concluding the much delayed broadcast digital migration but deferred the (ASO date to 30 June 2022 to allow the Minister to complete installations to households that has applied on 31st October 2021. It is important to indicate that, as usual, e-TV has since appealed this judgement.
- 1.1.5 The Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition has gazetted a request for comments on the DTIC's intention to prohibit the importation of analogue television sets, to prohibit the dumping of analogue TV sets in South Africa whilst supporting the penetration of digital television viewing.
- 1.1.6 We have managed to conclude SABC analogue Switch-off in the five provinces of the Free-State, Northern Cape, North-West, Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces. In the provinces where analogue has been switched-off, we have concluded a process of re-arranging spectrum (Restacking) in these 5 provinces thereby giving a way for the spectrum to be assigned for future technology usages.

2. Date for Final Switch- Off of Analogue Signal and the End of Dual Illumination Period

- 2.1 Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies in line with paragraph 3.3.1 of the Broadcasting Digital Migration Policy published in Government Notice No. 958, Government *Gazette* No. 31408 of 08 September 2008, as amended, determine the 31st of March 2022 as the date for the final switch-off of the analogue signal and the end of dual illumination.
- 2.2 The Minister had considered the two (2) conditions for the end of dual illumination period as set out in the Digital Migration Regulations published in Government Notice No. 1070, Government *Gazette* No. 36000 of 14 December 2012, and satisfied herself that these conditions have been met as follows:

- (a) that the electronic communications network service licensee, SENTECH, appointed to provide signal distribution services to the SABC has ensured that the digital broadcast signal for the SABC has reached hundred percent (100%) through the terrestrial and the satellite networks; and
- (b) that the coverage requirements for Multiplexes 1 and 2 based on the terrestrial television broadcasting service licensees licence conditions have been met, for those licensees who have appointed an electronic communications network service licensee to provide signal distribution services.

3. Gauteng High Court judgement and Progress with the Set Top Boxes (STBs) Installations

- 3.1 We welcomed the Gauteng High Court judgement including the deferment of the ASO Date from 31st March 2022 to 30 June 2022. The deferment is to give government sufficient time to complete installations of Set Top Boxes (STB) for households who have timeously registered and thus are entitled to receive their STBs before the analogue switch off. The 30 June 2022 date coincides with date ICASA has announced as the end of transitional period for the broadcasting services and signal distributors.
- 3.2 The Department of Communications and Digital Technologies committed to ensure that the 507 251 households that registered by the 31 October 2021 have their STBs installed by no later than 30 June 2022 and same for those the High Court directed be installed by no later than 30 September 2022.
- 3.3 As of 25 April 2022, of the 507 251 households, we had distributed **258 821 STBs** to the beneficiary households and **109 000** STBs installed, with 6973 beneficiaries not having been found at their registered addresses and could not be reached through the provided mobile numbers.
- 3.4 We are pleased to report the completion of installations to all households that registered and qualified by 31 October 2021 for the Gauteng province. The installations of STBs for those who applied by 31 October 2021 in

Northern Cape should be concluded in the next few days. Equally, we are on course to completing the remaining installations in the months of May and June 2022.

4. Impact of the KZN and Eastern Cape floods disaster on the STBs installations

- 4.1 We are currently undertaking assessments on the impact of the recent floods in KZN and EC on both the households with installed STBs and the structural integrity and existence of houses of registered households awaiting installation of STBs.
- 4.2 We have adopted a three (3)-pronged approach, particularly in eThekweni and Ugu districts due to high number of registrations and high impact of the floods:
- (a) Quarantine the numbers to still be installed but working with Department of Human Settlements to verify the number of households both installed and awaiting installations to determine the extent of the damage to the homes for continuing installation or replacing damaged installations. We will communicate as soon as possible the number of households whose installations will be delayed as we await the resettlement process.
 - (b) For the registered households whose homes require re-settlement or repair, we will work with Human Settlements to ensure installations when repairs or resettlement is completed.
 - (c) Continue with installations to the households whose homes physical structures were not damaged by the rains.

5. End-of-Life Stage for Analogue Technology and Digital Television as a way of watching TV in South Africa

- 5.1 We have previously indicated that we have received correspondence from the Analogue Transmitters technology manufacturers and repairers that their last inventory stock hold was in 2018
- 5.2 On the 24th of February 2022, the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition on behalf of the International Trade Administration

Commission of South Africa and following a request from the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies, gazetted an Invitation for the Public to Comment on the Introduction of a Policy Directive on the Importation of Analogue Television Sets.

- 5.3 The intention of the Policy Directive is to prohibit importers, retailers, wholesalers, and manufacturers from shipping to and importation of all analogue television sets classified under HS8528.7 after 31 March 2022.
- 5.4 Understanding that the retail market will have analogue TV sets, the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies has commenced consultations with TV sets manufacturers and distributors within the country with the purpose of gazetting a Policy Directive to require for all Digital TV sets in South Africa to carry a Go Digital stamp to assist consumers from purchasing analogue TV sets.
- 5.5 Given the prevalence of Smart TVs in the country, SENTECH will commence a process to create a channel to carry streaming content or OTT from the current DTT/ DTH platform. More details will be shared during the Department's Budget Vote speech on the 18th of May 2022.
- 5.6 We will also provide further details on additional channels on the DTT/ DTH platform during the Budget Vote Speech with the purpose of bring new and additional content with new owners as part of grow and diversifying South Africa's creative industry.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 We are currently implementing an accelerated distribution and installation of STB's drive in the remaining 4 provinces (Gauteng, Western-Cape, Eastern Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal) to ensure that we meet the deadline.

6.2 The government of South Africa remains committed to its objective of supporting indigent households to ensure universal access of digital services. We will commence with the end of September target immediately when we conclude a province, as it is a case in the Gauteng Province. We are also in a process of creating STB capacity for any subsequent registrations and placement in the retail market for future replacement and access to any requiring citizen.

6.3 We are continuing to increase our capacity to install more STB daily. SENTECH is out on a call for STB Installer applications to augment our installations capacity. Therefore, Sentech is constantly intensifying installer capacity nationally to ensure that all the registered and qualifying households are migrated within the set timelines.

Thank you,
//End.

Enquiries: Tlangelani Manganyi 060 886-4670

Media@DCDT.gov.za

Facebook : Department of Communications & Digital Technologies.

Twitter : @CommsZA

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