



MEDIA BRIEFING NOTES

BY

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RESPONSIBLE FOR ICT**

ON THE

**OUTCOME OF THE SPECIAL SESSION ON ON
DIGITAL TERRESTRIAL TELEVISION STANDARDS**

**INTER CONTINENTAL HOTEL BALL ROOM
LUSAKA, ZAMBIA
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Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press,

Welcome to this media briefing on the outcome of the Special Session of Ministers Responsible for ICT on Digital Terrestrial Television Broadcasting.

Given the fact that Digital Terrestrial Television Broadcasting Migration is one major transformation of the broadcasting sector currently underway, we deemed it necessary to brief you, our media practitioners about the outcome of our meeting, which is part of the milestones of our region's march towards digital migration.

Our hope in briefing you is that you, as information multipliers with the media that enables you to reach all our citizens within your spheres of influence, you will join us in the march towards digital migration by doing what you do best, which is to educate our citizens, your audiences in all our Member States to know what this digital Migration is and how it will affect them.

The background to digital migration is that, the process of migration from analogue to digital broadcasting was set in motion in 2000 by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), with June 17, 2015 as the agreed international migration deadline.

Accordingly, in 2006, the ITU Region 1 established the Geneva ITU GE06 Agreement which sets out the technical standards for digital television infrastructure and broadcast consumer equipment (television sets etc) and all SADC Member States are signatories to that Agreement.

Digital technology in the provision of broadcasting services primarily releases spectrum efficiency and flexibility of technology, allowing programme compression for several programme transmission in digital technology as opposed to only one on a single analogue frequency.

We, the SADC Region have since been fully seized with ensuring that we meet the global deadline stated above, by firstly setting ourselves December 31, 2013 as the SADC deadline to switchover, well ahead of the global switchover date to ensure that all related challenges related are overcome before the 2015 global deadline.

During this sitting, we, the Ministers responsible for ICT thus reaffirmed the position that all SADC Member States switch to Digital Television Broadcasting by December 31, 2013.

For broadcast service provision in Digital Television Broadcasting, Member States must have a technical digital broadcasting standard.

In this regard, Three (3) standards were placed at our disposal to choose from, namely: ISDB-T (Brazil and Japan), DVB-T (International Telecommunications Union (ITU) – Region 1) and DVB-T2 (ITU – Region

For the broadcast services consumers, the swift migration from analogue to digital television requires Member States to provide Set Top Boxes (STBs) to enable existing television sets to operate on digital broadcast channels until all television consumers have acquired digital television sets.

During our meeting of May 2010 held in Luanda, Angola, we recognised the need to make informed decisions on the ultimate standard that the SADC Region would adopt. Due to the importance and the urgency of the issues as well as the need to meet our digital migration switchover date and ultimately the international one, we resolved to set up an Ad Hoc Committee and mandated it to undertake further investigations and advise Member States on the viability of the different technical standards with the view for us as a region to move towards adopting a common standard.

As part of the Ad Hoc Committee, a team comprising representatives from the SADC Secretariat and nine (9) SADC Member States, namely, Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe, undertook study visits to France, United Kingdom and Brazil to further investigate and advise on the viability of the above mentioned different technical standards of digital broadcasting.

The Ad Hoc Committee's assessment of the different television broadcasting technology standards was based on the need to comply with the GE-06 standards.

The Ad Hoc Committee's Report was also informed by the position with regard to the status of digital television systems deployment, standards preferences and ongoing plans on Digital Television Migration among the SADC Member States, as it was considered that this could have a strong bearing on the standard to be ultimately adopted by the Region.

Our Special Session just ended here today has considered the findings of the Ad Hoc Committee and used it as the basis for the decisions we took for the adoption of the SADC standard.

In making its recommendations, the Ad Hoc Committee made several observations including the following:

- i. in recognition of the fact that SADC Member States are party to the GE-06 Agreement, the SADC Region should, in principle adopt a Digital Terrestrial Television standard that fully conforms with the requirements of the GE-06 Agreement and Plan.
- ii. the need to comply with the ITU deadline of June 2015 for the Migration from Analogue to Digital Terrestrial Television as well as the SADC deadline of December 31, 2013;
- iii. that some aspects of the other Standards being investigated are yet to be tested in terms of compliance to GE-06 after which they also need to be validated by the ITU, before they can be recommended for use within the GE-06 planning area; and
- iv. that a significant number of SADC Member States have commenced implementing the DVB-T Standard as per the GE-06 Agreement.

Following our deliberations, we, the ministers responsible for ICT in the SADC Region considered and approved the recommendations of the Committee of Senior Officials on the standard to be adopted for the SADC Region as follows:

- (a) SADC Member States should adopt DVB-T2 with MPEG4 compression as the recommended digital terrestrial standard for the Region. However, those Member States that have already started implementing DVB-T Standard should proceed with its implementation but ultimately migrate to DVB-T2 with MPEG4 compression; and
- (b) any SADC Member State that decided to adopt any other standard than DVB-T2 with MPEG4 compression should do so in compliance with GE-06 Agreement.

We also approved the revised SADC Digital television Migration Roadmap and the SADC Strategy on adoption of the Common position at international fora, in particular, the International Telecommunications ITU.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press, those are the few items I thought of sharing with you.

I thank you