

**SPEECH BY HONOURABLE EDWARD OMANE-BOAMAH, MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS, AT THE  
DIGITAL TERRESTRIAL TELEVISION PUBLIC FORUM**

**– 6<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2016**

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Distinguished Members of the Digital Broadcasting Migration Committee (DBMC),

Board Members and Management of the National Communications Authority (NCA),

Distinguished Members of the Press

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Evening,

On behalf of his Excellency, the President of Ghana, President John Dramani Mahama, I welcome all of you to this landmark occasion.

Switching from Analogue television to Digital Terrestrial television is an exercise that the Government of Ghana is taking very seriously as the country stands to benefit immeasurably from this project. Going digital will improve the country in education development, information dissemination, job creation as well as create new investment opportunities.

This day has been long in coming simply because we wanted to ensure that consumers would have the information at the appropriate time, when work on the DTT platform has commenced. This is after a successful process ending with the Government signing a contract with KNET Limited, a Ghanaian-owned private firm at a cost of US\$82.3M contract.

The Contract demands the completion of the DTT network in 12 months, with the project to be executed in nine months and a further three months for resolving all teething challenges.

In addition, to this, we have learnt some very useful lessons from other counties and we are proud to say here that we have had some very useful participation from key stakeholders including Ghana

Independent Broadcaster's Association (GIBA). As private broadcasters, we were bound to ensure that their inputs formed part of the process to avoid detrimental effects on their businesses.

On digital TV migration I would like to restate that the benefits of the migration exercise to both consumers as well as broadcasters are also enormous. The positive benefits of this migration are countless, with the most important being the digital dividend. From the digital dividend, the 800 mhz was auctioned to improve access to data as we believe that access to internet is a great boost for development-Scancom Limited emerged as the winner. Another plus for this is the fact that the money obtained from auction was used to pay for the contract of US\$2.3 million. This can truly be said to be truly Ghanaian, as the entire process was done by Ghanaians, paid for by Ghanaians and to be used by Ghanaians.

This goes further to prove the point that in Ghana, we have the solutions and that we should not always look outside for the solutions.

For consumers, the benefits include having more stations on your TV with crystal clear sound and pictures, better TV reception and more programme information services.

The obvious observation is that many African countries did not meet the June 17, 2015 deadline with some like Sierra Leone yet to start any physical work on the ground. Other countries like Kenya have complete the migration with 60% coverage of the nation currently as they continue work on covering remaining population with satellite gap filling option.

The roll out of Digital Terrestrial Television platform for migration would happen in three (3) phases as follows:

- Phase 1: Greater Accra and Ashanti Regions by February 2016
- Phase 2: Volta, Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions by May 2016
- Phase 3: Western, Central, Eastern and Brong Ahafo Regions by July 2016.

In short the 2:4:4 strategy.

The TV stations that are currently operating analogue networks are GTV, TV3, Metro TV, TV Africa, Crystal TV, Viasat 1, E-TV Ghana, Viasat-1, Net-2 TV, Top TV, UTV, Coastal TV, Cardinal TV, Light TV and Kantanka TV. All these stations would be transmitted in digital form at the end of the migration.

After the rollout of Free-to-Air (FTA) DTT services across the country, one year would be allowed for consumers to acquire digital TV receiving apparatus (i.e. set-top-box decoders or integrated Digital TV sets) before the analogue television services are switched off to complete the migration. This grace period is to ensure that no consumer is disenfranchised from watching television.

It is my sincere hope that this forum after the launch will not only provide a forum for discussion but a forum for consensus building and action planning that will enable us finalize on the digital television transition. The following challenges should be critically looked at;

- How to curb deliberate misinformation of the public by the media houses and the general public
- Interference by political events because this is an election year, will Ghanaians be able to appreciate the public education around this time.

With the world gradually drifting towards internet, there is a need to also look at merging Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) content with Over-the-Top (OTT) services to achieve the full benefit of the digital transition. OTT will work hand-in-hand with the DTT by way of carrying the contents of DTT over the internet to ensure that contents reach farther consumers than the DTT alone can reach. This will eventually provide more employment opportunity as well as revenue increase.

The digital terrestrial television transition offers the advantage of more channels becoming available which then poses the challenge of filling the channel with quality and numerous contents. How do we create quality and compelling local contents?

I look forward to your recommendations on the best way forward for the benefit of all in a cost effective manner.

Allow me to congratulate the Digital Broadcasting Migration Committee, they have worked tirelessly on the migration process and I am sure that they are delighted that finally, the process has kicked off. Government, through the DBMC and the National Communications Authority, has developed a comprehensive Public Education Plan to ensure that everyone in Ghana hears and learns about the migration, how they can benefit from it and what to do. They have also developed a reference guide for the media and consumers to help them better understand the project.

You, the media, are our partners. We count on you to use your good efforts to drive our messages to Ghanaians. On Wednesday, 3rd February, 2016 at the La Palm Royal Beach Hotel in Accra, the National Communications Authority (NCA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Communication and the Digital Broadcasting Migration Committee (DBMC) organized a training on the Digital Terrestrial Migration exercise for journalists in the Greater Accra Region. The significance of the resource training is to equip the media with the necessary know-how on digital television prior to the official launch of the educational campaign. There will be training workshops in the other regions to ensure that you understand and pass the right information on to their audience.

We encourage everyone to listen to the educational campaigns that will be running. We also urge consumers to fully embrace digital broadcasting and purchase set top boxes and television sets which have been approved for use in Ghana. Let us avoid the last minute rush and the inconveniences which you may face if you are not well prepared.

This is because, you the consumer, are the purpose of this migration. Remember, your attitude is the one thing that keeps you in control.

In conclusion, allow me once again to express my gratitude towards your response to our invitation and may we have a successful campaign.

I hereby duly launch the Publicity Campaign for the Digital Migration.

Ghanafuo, let's go digital!