



South Africa moves towards Digital migration

July 22, 2009 in Digital & New Media

Johannesburg (IT News Africa)-SOUTH Africa took another step towards migrating from analogue to digital broadcasting in the country, with the launch of Digital Dzonga, an inclusive forum to drive the digital migration process in the country.

Communications Minister, Sipiwe Nyanda officially launched the initiative in Johannesburg yesterday. "Digital Dzonga has provided a good model for many countries to follow. We need to share our lessons with our neighbouring countries, particularly those in the SADC region, and assist them where possible as part of our contribution to Africa's development. "Launching Digital Dzonga is the beginning of a long journey of accelerating the country to digital switch-over in 2011. We will not rest until this deadline is achieved.

Admittedly, there lies a lot of work ahead of us, but that should not deter us from continuing on this path of changing our people's lives for the better. "I would like to see the rest of South Africa, with special emphasis on the rural areas, being galvanised and ready for digital switchover. This is a responsibility that we as government have placed on Digital Dzonga," he told delegates. "This marks another major milestone in our journey to broadcasting digital migration as we formally launch Digital Dzonga, following the successful switch-on of the digital signal on 30 October 2008.

The men and women serving on Digital Dzonga Advisory Council bring with them a lot of experience and expertise to drive migration activities in the public interest. "On behalf of the Government, I would like to thank industry and labour for making these resources available.

This gesture augurs well for a continued positive relationship between the Department, civil society, organized labour and industry in working towards achieving a common goal." Nyanda said his Department will in the next few weeks expedite the establishment of the Digital Migration Office to support the Digital Dzonga Council and management of migration project on a day to day basis. "I understand that the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) has released the Set-Top-Box (STB) Specification, which is a positive development.

We therefore, urge all parties dealing in software related issues to conclude their agreements so that manufacturing of STBs can commence in earnest. "This will run concurrently with the finalisation of the STB manufacturing strategy by the Department of Communications.

Lessons learnt elsewhere, including countries with bigger economies have adequately demonstrated that migration is a challenging project that no country can claim to have mastered. We all learn as we go along," he added. Cabinet took a policy decision in 2007 to migrate the country's broadcasting system from analogue to digital also a means to address socio-economic challenges and meet the Millennium Development Goals.

The first Digital Terrestrial Television Readiness Report has been released by the Council.