Progress Report on DIGITAL MIGRATION PROJECT IN MALAWI

By Gideon Keith Munthali,
Digital Migration Coordinator,
Ministry of ICT & Civic Education,
Republic of Malawi.
PRESENTATION FLOW

• Introduction
• Progress status
• Awareness Creation
• Achievements
• Challenges
INTRODUCTION

• The Ministry of ICT and Civic Education is leading implementation of Digital Migration in Malawi

• The journey started in 2010 when the Digital Migration project was incorporated in the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP)

• Malawi adopted a consultative and multi-stakeholder approach in the management of the process.

• Ministry established a multi stakeholder Digital Migration Steering Committee and Sub-Committees to look at specific issues: Policy, Technical, Communication, Legal, Content, Procurement and Finance
The Malawi Digital Broadcasting Policy approved by Cabinet in July, 2013

Malawi Digital Broadcasting Communication Strategy drafted and launched in December, 2013

Malawi commissioned its DTT Network on 1st December, 2013

The Malawi Government registered a public signal distributor, the Malawi Digital Broadcast Network Limited (MDBNL) in February, 2014

MDBNL, mandated to provide signal distribution services to all licensed Content Service Providers (CSPs) in Malawi, officially started its operations in July, 2015
Progress

- The Malawi DTT network has 5 Transmitters installed in the Northern Region (1), Central Region (1), Eastern Region (1) and Southern Region (2)., a Head End in Lilongwe and a Sub Head-End in commercial Capita, Blantyre
- Currently MDBNL has five transmitters each with an approximate coverage radius of 100km:
- DTT Signal coverage is now at 55% of the population (about 7.5 million Malawians) surpassing the analogue penetration which stands at 48%
- Malawi has adopted a phased analogue switch off and officially switched off analogue TV broadcasting on 17th June, 2015 in two cities of Mzuzu and Zomba.
- Total switch off for the two cities scheduled for 30th June, 2016
- Currently, there are 17 local channels on the Malawi DTT bouquet offered for free. 3 are on dual illumination while the rest are purely on DTT.
- It is expected that Malawi will soon fill the Bouquet with even more than 20 channels when those that were licensed for TV broadcasts roll out soon
- Consumer awareness underway
Communications Act has been revised to include digital migration. Bill now before Parliament
Digital Broadcasting and Signal Distribution Regulations finalized and to be gazette soon.
Of the 15 countries in the SADC region, Malawi is among the only five have been recognised by the ITU to have successfully migrated alongside Mauritius, Tanzania, Namibia and Mozambique.
Awareness Creation

– Digital broadcasting is a new phenomenon which will have implications on the consumers and stakeholders.

– Little or no awareness among the citizens on digital broadcasting, a situation which may result in people being not ready for digital broadcasting on switch on.

– Need for awareness to prepare stakeholders and the public to understand the advantages, risks and actions required to migrate to digital television broadcasting so that they are ready to accept, embrace, support and adopt this change.

– Government developed and launched the Malawi Digital Broadcasting Communication Strategy developed in 2013 to act as a guiding tool for planning and implementation of all public awareness and civic education activities regarding digital migration to ensure adequate understanding of digital migration among all stakeholders

– National-wide public awareness The Strategy was launched in December, 2013
Awareness Creation

In February, 2016, a multi-stakeholder taskforce (the Ministry, regulator – MACRA, signal distributor – MDBNL and broadcasters) was formed and is driving the Public Awareness campaign.

The taskforce reviewed and rebranded the DTT as Malawi “Kiliye Kiliye’ Digital TV.

Redesigned IEC materials and produced a ‘Kiliye Kiliye’ TV Theme Song which enjoying airtime in most radio stations in Malawi.

Launched the Malawi “Kiliye Kiliye” Digital TV Campaign in April, 2016.
Consumer and Stakeholder Awareness

Sensitise the masses about Digital Technology, Digital Broadcasting, Digital Transition/Migration

Implore/persuade people to buy STBs

Inform of the Digital migration advantages

Persuade media and all stakeholders to participate in the digital awareness

Persuade CSPs to produce good local content

Government liberalised the sale of decoders and Antennas and perhaps soon a duty waiver on decoders and digital ready TV receive equipment will be granted
Communication Interventions

- Radio and Television programmes
- Jingles
- Posters
- Fliers
- Brochures
- Newspapers
- Rallies/Road shows
- Information kits
- Media Briefings and Tours
- Press conferences
- Correspondences
- Billboards
- Meetings
- Community/Rural Film shows
Schools Outreach
Road Shows
Media Orientation
Meetings with the Local Business Community & District Executive Committees
No More Analogue: Malawi “Kiliye Kiliye” Digital TV Is Here
Don’t Throw Away The Analogue Tv Screen: Just Buy Malawi Digital “Kiliye Kiliye” Decoder to Enjoy Better Quality TV and More Free Channels
Achievements

- Awareness levels have risen
- Uptake of digital decoders has increased in anticipation of the complete switch off of transmitters in two border areas will take place on June 30, 2016
- Content producers have improved their quality of their productions
Further Initiatives

- Government has liberalized the importation, sale and distribution of Set Top Boxes
- Government has acknowledged the need and is considering waiving duty on importation of Set Just three weeks ago Government reduced the price of Set Top Boxes, the fourth time under a year
- Content producers have improved their production
- The regulator has changed the licensing framework and now requires that 60 percent of programming should have local content.
Challenges

- Lack of funds continue to affect delivery of public awareness.
- The country has an active network reaching 55% of population but the supply of receiving equipment is low.
- Expansion of the network is being affected by budgetary constraints
- In total we have about 35,000 families watching TV using the digital network against a population of 7.5 million covered by the signal
Thank You All