

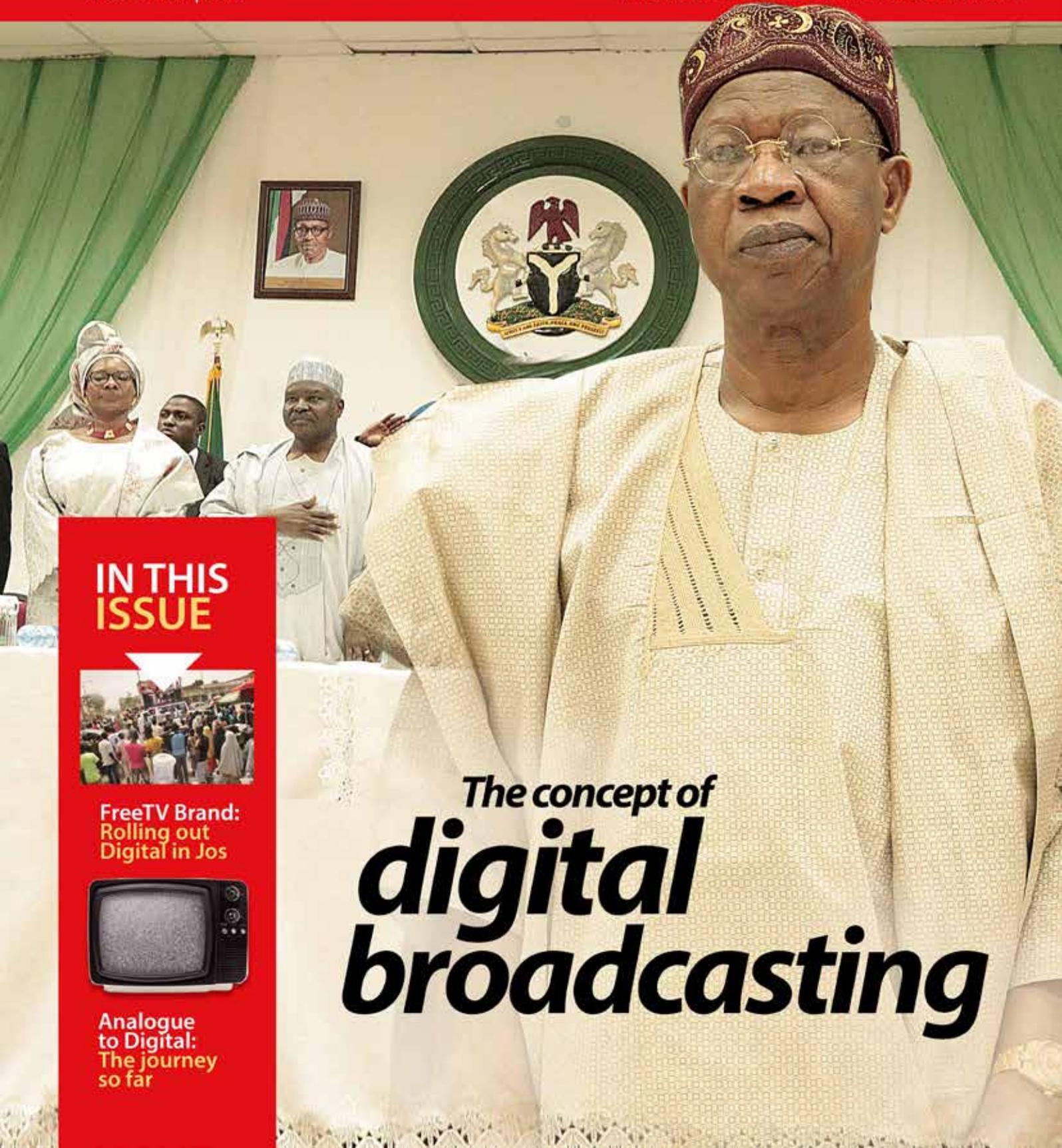


FREE TV

NEWSLETTER

Issue no. 01 | 2017

A Publication of Cable Channels Nigeria Limited



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- Building STB manufacturing
- Developing content proposition
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- Customer support & call centres
- Guidance on how to fund ASO



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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Cable Channels Nigeria Limited (CCNL) is a consortium of licensed Cable TV Multipoint Multichannel Distribution Service (MMDS) operators in the country with vast knowledge and experience spanning over 20 years and some core investors. The MMDS operators started private broadcasting in Nigeria and pioneered digital PayTV broadcasting as the country set out on this journey of transition since 2009.

As the Official Nigerian content aggregator for the DTT and DSAT Free-to-view platforms CCNL is responsible to manage, market and promote to the final consumer as part of the Nigerian National Digital Switchover (DSO) Strategy.

Broadly, our responsibilities include but are not limited to Platform Management; Content Management; Consumer Audience Measurement; Signal Contribution; Branding, Promotion and other services.

In addition, the Federal Government of Nigeria through the NBC, in its wisdom, assigned distribution of the Government subsidized boxes to CCNL because of our knowledge of the Set Top Box hardware distribution network in Nigeria being our area of core competence along with aggregation and distribution of Television content from all over the world.

We have so far effectively and efficiently carried out our content aggregation mandate in the cities of DSO switch on, that is, Jos and Abuja and distributed the set-top-boxes into the distribution channels as delivered to us, securing the widest possible reach, with value for consumers who desire to have the subsidized set top boxes.

We at CCNL are glad to be a part of driving the changing dynamics of the global broadcast industry in Nigeria.

This publication, therefore will enlighten the industry operatives and indeed the general public of the step by step journey to the fulfilment of the mandate of the Federal Government, the Regulator, the Digiteam, Set-Top-Box Manufacturers, the Channel Owners, Signal Distributors and the Content Aggregators as well as sundry success agents.

Periodically, we promise to bring you industry-wide events and activities to keep you abreast of the progress of the digital switch on/over in Nigeria and global trends as it affects our industry.

It will make a delightful company and reference for knowledge of the broadcast industry in Nigeria.

As we debut, we encourage you to take interest in our every edition to follow trends in the industry and be better informed.

You are welcome.

www.freetv.ng



Rajiv Mekkat
Chief Executive Officer



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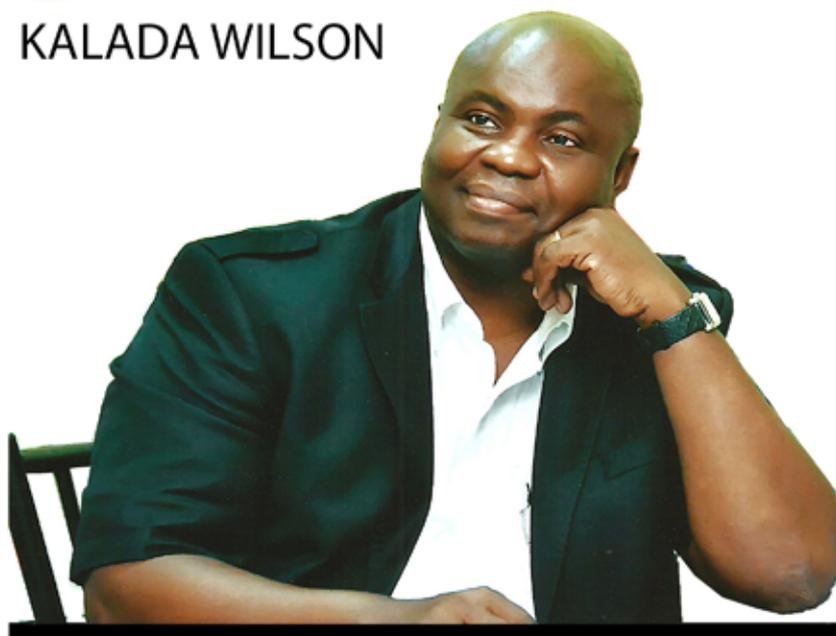
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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

KALADA WILSON



The idea of the FreeTv Newsletter is to have an In-house industry-based news publication to market our products and services, and to create credibility and build our organization's identity amongst peers, clients, candidates, members, employees and vendors.

This maiden edition of FreeTv Newsletter carries the story of the evolution of the digitization concept; how and why Nigeria is intricately involved and the key drivers and players of the process.

After many failed attempts at meeting up deadlines, the man with the requisite passion drives the Jos Launch to fruition on the 30th April, 2016. Why did it have to start from Jos? You will find out.

Also, you will be informed of how the players in the digitization ecosystem, that is Channel Owners, Content Aggregator, the Signal Distributors and Set-up-box Manufacturers are configured to perform their roles in the digital switch On and eventual Switchover.

And of course, you will be served a good dose of pictorials of the Jos Launch and other events.

Happy reading.

CONCEPT OF DIGITAL BROADCASTING

By Engr. Friday Ukwela

The electromagnetic waves also referred to as spectrum, a scarce natural resource, is the medium for broadcasting or telecommunication. And It needs to be managed and regulated for efficient use.

The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) is a United Nations specialized agency responsible for information and communication technologies (ICTs) and is saddled with the responsibility of managing the spectrum.

Through studies, it came up with further developments in Television Technology, both in Video Processing and Compression. New Generation Television Transmission Formats have resulted in greater efficiency in the use of the available broadcast spectrum.

In 2006, the ITU resolved that all countries in ITU Region 1 (Europe, the former Soviet Republics, Africa, Middle East and the Islamic Republic of Iran) should transit from analogue to digital broadcasting services by 17th June 2015. After this date, analogue broadcasting services will not be protected from interferences. Meaning, in the event signals from compliant countries stray in to bothering defaulting countries, complaints will not be taken seriously.

The ITU council resolution 1185 gave effect to the adoption of Digital Terrestrial Broadcasting. Adopting Digital Terrestrial Broadcasting will not only improve the quality of reception, but will also ensure efficient use of the scarce natural resource, the broadcast spectrum.

Nigeria, like all other Member States of International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Region1 signed the Geneva 2006 Agreement on Transition from Analogue to Digital Terrestrial Broadcasting. Benefits derivable from the digital regime include;

- (a) Save in spectrum since a minimum of 16 – 20 programmes could be transmitted simultaneously, using MPEG-4 compression technique, from a station using the same bandwidth originally used for single programme (channel) in analogue transmission.
- (b) Higher quality audio and video.
- (c) Efficient signal processing and flexibility in programmes editing.
- (d) Greater variety (added services) such as Internet, Multimedia, Banking, Home shopping, Pay per view, Video-on-Demand and faster rates of data transmission.
- (e) Consistency of data flow over long distances.
- (f) Interactive programming (two-way data exchange).
- (g) Lower digital transmitter power would cover a wider area in comparison with analogue transmitter.
- (h) Support for reliable mobile reception of video, internet, and multimedia data.

The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) in its report identified The Government, The Regulator, The Broadcaster, and The Consumer as the major stakeholders in the implementation of the Transition from analogue to Digital Transmission and recommended the setting up of a Presidential Advisory Committee on Transition from Analogue to Digital Broadcasting known as the DigiTeam by the Federal Government of Nigeria.

The journey towards Digital Terrestrial Broadcasting on the UHF platform started in Nigeria on June 17, 2006 and was expected to come to an end on June 17, 2015 when television services in Nigeria would have become completely “digital” even though it had earlier set June 17, 2012 as switch-off date.

National Broadcasting Commission as the arrowhead of the transition process in Nigeria organized several Workshops/seminars to sensitize stakeholders, particularly the Broadcasters.



Guests at the Jos Launch Ceremony

In November 2007, the National Broadcasting Commission briefed the 38th National Council on Information and Communications in Jos on the following:

1. The imperatives of Digitisation
2. The urgent need for the nation to take advantage of this inevitable global phenomenon.
3. And by December 2007, His Excellency The late President Umaru Musa Yar'adua graciously approved the following:
 4. That the National Broadcasting Commission should set in motion, and pilot Nigeria's digitization programme.
 5. The target date of June 17th, 2012 for Nigeria's analogue switch-off.
 6. As a precursor to Digital broadcasting in Nigeria, the National Broadcasting Commission directed all MMDS re-broadcast licensees and DTH operators to digitize their operations by March 2008.
 7. And, upon the recommendation of the National Broadcasting Commission, the Federal Government of Nigeria on October 13, 2008, set up and inaugurated a Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) on Transition from Analogue to Digital Broadcasting in Nigeria with the following Terms of Reference:
 8. Recommend a policy on digital terrestrial broad-

cast transition using global best practices.

9. Recommend appropriate regulatory framework.
10. Recommend a National Broadcasting Model.
11. Assess impact of digitization on the consumers and recommend possible government intervention.
12. Determine the quantum of expected digital dividend.
13. Assess environmental impact of digitization, if any, and recommend steps to be taken.
14. Advise government on any action relevant to smooth transition in Nigeria.

PAC eventually prepared and submitted an executive report to the then Hon. Minister of Information and Communications, late Prof. Dora Akunyili on June 20, 2009. The report contained a well defined Road Map that would have seen Nigeria completing the Digital Switchover by June 17- 2012. Unfortunately, because of political problems, the government of Nigeria could not address the implementation of the recommendations of the PAC Report till 2012. On March 04, 2012, the Federal Executive Council considered the Draft White paper on transition from Analogue to Digital broadcasting on the UHF platform drawn from the PAC document and adopted it.

Thereafter the White paper was approved by the Federal Executive Council. One of the recommendations in



Alhaji Lai Mohammed,
Hon. Minister For Information & Culture

the approved White paper is the splitting of NTA - the engineering infrastructure of NTA to be separated from NTA and to form the backbone for the new Broadcasting Signal Distribution. Government also approved two additional Broadcasting Signal Distributors. Nigeria thereafter set a new switchover date of January 01, 2015.

DigiTeam Nigeria, a Committee saddled with the responsibility of implementing the transition from Analogue to Digital broadcasting on the UHF platform in Nigeria along with the Regulator, NBC, which was also part of the recommendations in the approved White paper, was inaugurated on December 20, 2012 by the then Secretary to the Federal Government of Nigeria, Senator Pius Anyim Pius with the following terms of reference;

1. Modalities for splitting of broadcast services into Broadcast content provision and signal Distributors.
2. Modalities and conditions for the operations of the Broadcast Signal Distributors.
3. Modalities for splitting of NTA into Broadcasting Signal Distributor and Content Provider.
4. Restructuring of the licensing Framework in the Broadcast sector.
5. Regulatory Framework to guide the licensing DTT

services.

6. Management of the Spectrum dividend.
7. Establish and implement a comprehensive public awareness Programme in consultation with stakeholders and regulators.
8. Follow-up the process towards the enactment of all the enabling laws and necessary amendments to existing legislation.
9. Develop the specifications of the set-top-box (STB) taking into consideration the need, or otherwise, for establishing minimum specifications for STB.
10. Implement the process for establishing of Broadcasting Signal Distributor.
11. Implement the process for the selection of the STB Manufacturers
12. Ensure appropriate coordination with other African Countries at the sub-regional (ECOWAS) and continental (African Union) level, as well as with NEPAD programme as may be required.
13. Ensure that the Hon. Minister of Information and Communications and the National Assembly are regularly updated on the implementation of the programme.
14. Carry out all relevant activities related to the success of the transition programme

DigiTeam Nigeria in collaboration with the National Broadcasting Commission worked out detailed modalities as it relates to publicity, contents creation, technical specifications of STB and Receivers (ECOWAS minimum spec for STB and receivers which was approved by ECOWAS Ministers in charge of ICTs in Banjul Gambia), legislations, as well as identified possible sources of funding for the transition process.

Also, the following Policy Decisions were taken by Government in the implementation of the Transition from Analogue to Digital Broadcasting in Nigeria:

There will be a separation of functions in the Broadcast Industry with key players being

1. The Broadcaster, will be responsible for the Content of the Broadcast
2. -- Signal Distributor or Carrier will be responsible for the Transmission of the Signals to the Viewers at home. Three Signal Distributors or Carriers are to be licensed, one of which is to evolve from the Nigerian Television Authority – NTA and subsequently registered as Integrated Television Services (ITS).The Transmission Standard was agreed to be the DVB-T2 Format with MPEG-4 AVC Compression Format.
3. Three Broadcast Signal Distributors: Integrated Television Services, Pinnacle Communications



Engr. Friday Ukwela

“ Adopting Digital Terrestrial Broadcasting will not only improve the quality of reception, but will also ensure efficient use of scarce natural resources, the broadcast spectrum ”

Limited, and MTS were licensed to transmit the signals of broadcasters to various homes in Nigeria.

4. Set Top Box Manufacturers, to enable existing Analogue Television Receivers to continue Receiving the Digital Transmission after the Switch Over Date to be manufactured in Nigeria.
5. Thirteen companies were given Type Approval Certification to set up plants and manufacture Set Top Boxes locally in Nigeria.
6. Inview Technology Ltd was engaged as consultant to provide encryption and the middleware

requirements for the Set Top Boxes.

7. Cable Channels Nig. Ltd, (CCNL) a consortium of the MMDS re-broadcast licensees were licensed as the Content Aggregator.
8. The National Broadcasting Commission working with DigiTeam Nigeria prepared a detailed budget for the implementation of the transition programme in Nigeria amounting to well over N60 Billion as well as a detailed roadmap for the transition process.
9. However, funding was not forthcoming and this became a major source of the delay in the implementation of the Transition Process

PILOT DTT ROLL OUT

For many reasons of being first in the industry which includes, the first to broadcast Television signals in colour, Jos the Plateau state capital was chosen for a Pilot DTT roll out. The Pilot Project was Flagged off on June 30, 2014.

The roll out project could not be sustained because of the challenge of availability of Set Top Boxes (STB) since the STB manufacturers were yet to set up their plants and start the manufacturing business locally in Nigeria.

The Federal Government therefore approved the importation of limited quantity of STBs for the Pilot DTT Project.

Thirteen STB manufacturers were given the nod to import a limited number of STBs for the purpose of implementing the Pilot DTT roll out while setting up their plants to manufacture the boxes locally.

It has been a difficult journey so far, with so many rivers yet to cross. But as determined as the stakeholders are, the government, Regulators, the set target of June17, 2017 is going to be achieved. Nigeria is left with no choice.



ROLLING OUT **DIGITAL** BROADCASTING IN JOS

By Kalada Wilson

There are stories behind every brand and for the FreeTV it has not been different even with the launch cocktail party on the eve of the formal flag off of the Digital Switch On in Jos, Plateau State on Friday the 29th April, 2016.

Interestingly, the party primarily intended to inaugurate the FreeTV brand operated by the Cable Channels Nigeria Limited (CCNL), was also an occasion to let the world into the pivotal role and responsibilities of CCNL in Nigeria's Digital Switch Over from Analogue to Digital broadcasting.

The Honourable Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed who was the guest of honor was full of commendation for the brand which includes 15 Channels on startup and other value adds like Information service and Electronic Programme Guide as against the analogue system that is limited to few channels available locally with no additional value.

Counting the benefits of the Digital Switch Over, Alhaji Lai Mohammed said that the monumental

event is indeed revolutionising the broadcasting industry in the country as this will offer Nigerians high quality sound and high resolution pictures. At full switch on he noted, the country will have the largest digital viewers of 30 Million compared to some European nations that achieved similar feat.

The Vice Chairman of CCNL, Engr. Mohamed Bawa, informed the August gathering that CCNL is a consortium of Licensed Cable TV Multi Channel Multipoint Distribution Service (MMDS) operators in the country with vast knowledge and experience spanning more than 20 years and some core investors.

The Cable TV operators he further explained started private broadcasting in Nigeria and pioneered digital pay-tv broadcasting as the country set out on the journey of transition since 2009.

CCNL as the official Content Aggregator for the DTT and DSAT free-to-view platform is responsible for the platform and Content Manage-





Guests at the FreeTV Brand Launch in Jos

ment; Consumer Audience measurement; Signal contribution; Branding and Promotion and other value added services.

FreeTV DTT and DSAT, according to Bawa, will comprise local and national free-to-air channels, selected thematic channels and some International FTA channels.

He commended the backend support given by the INVIEW Technology Nigeria Limited as well as Integrated Television Services (ITS), who are the signal distributors for the Jos pilot.

There were Goodwill messages from Plateau State which made history as the first state to go digital in Nigeria just as the Commissioner for Information and Communications, Hon. Mohammed Nazif Ahmad and the Acting Director-General of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) Ms. Alheri Saidu.

Other guests were the Acting Director-general of the Nigerian Television Authority, Heads of Media Houses, Directors of the NBC and others.



Dr. Armstrong Idachaba & Rajiv Mekkat

THE MYSTERY BEHIND FREETV SET-TOP-BOX

By Sir Godfrey Oluabunwa



Nigeria, like all the other member states of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Region 1 signed the Geneva 2006, Convention Agreement on Transition from Analogue to Digital Terrestrial Television Broadcasting. Since then the government have developed a white paper for the Digital Switch Over. DSO.

Television whether free to air, or paid for will remain first and foremost a cultural product firmly rooted and clothed in a national cultural context, with its own sensitivities and habits; Terrestrial Free to Air (FTA) broadcasting shall continue to play a key role in national social cohesion, and the Nigerian government through NBC should do whatever it takes to ensure this.

“ Content is the Primary driver of any broadcast just as good food is the determinant of any good Restaurant. ”

It is CONTENT and not technology that will drive the widespread adoption of digital television services in the New Economy. Content is the Primary driver of any broadcast just as good food is the determinant of any good Restaurant.

For the implementation of the ITU agreement in Nigeria, several Policy Decisions were taken by Government in the implementation of the Transition from Analogue to Digital Broadcasting in Nigeria: There will be a separation of functions in the Broadcast Industry;

1. The Broadcaster will be responsible for the Content of the Broadcast while;
2. Signal Distributor or Carrier will be responsible for the Transmission of the Signals to the Viewers at home.
3. Set Top Boxes to enable existing Analogue Terrestrial Television Receivers to continue receiving the Digital Transmission after the Switch Over Date will be manufactured in

Nigeria.4.The Transmission Standard shall be the DVB-T2 Format with MPEG-4 AVC Compression Format.

However, to create a compelling offering for Free to air (FTA) TV consumers in Nigeria, a Digital Content Aggregator was licensed to manage the free to air channels under the FREETV/FREESAT brand; aggregating all the old, the new and subsequent licensed FTA TV stations in Nigeria both local and international channels into a bouquet – “The FreeTv Box”

THE FREETV BOX

The FreeTv Set Top Box is a device or decoder which every TV household in Nigeria will require in order to continue to receive and enjoy their Free To Air TV(FTA) stations and channels (e.g. NTA, AIT, ChannelsTV, SilverbirdTV, State & Public TV stations etc.) on their analogue TV sets after the digital switch off by June 17, 2017.

What it means, is that with the freetv set top box under the digital migration, every TV household in Nigeria will no longer receive just the existing 4-5 FTA channels but will have access to over 30 FTA channels on Freetv box and more than additional 100 stations (News, Movies, Musical, Entertainment, Sports and More) on the freesat/Freetv box for FREE! Unlike Pay-tv decoders (STB), such as DSTV, StarTimes and GoTV where subscribers have to pay monthly subscription to have access to their channel.

BETWEEN FREETV DTT & DSAT

Freetv and Freetvsat comprise of existing national and local FTA channels, selected thematic channels and selected international FTA channels. Freetv and Freetvsat will deliver Nigerian digital incentive channels and improved signal reception and picture quality directly to homes via Set top boxes.

Nigeria’s FreeTV or DTT migration will be the largest in the world, compared to UK with 10M, Australia with 13M and New Zealand with 3M, Nigeria will have 30Million FreeTV Households by analogue switch off.

The Nigeria FreeTV comes in two reception packages Terrestrial& Satellite Modes. Over 70% of the Nigerian TV household will receive their digital FTA signal on the freetv set top box (Terrestrial) while

about 30% living in very remote and disperse areas will receive the digital FTA channels through Freetvsat box (Satellite)

WHY THE NIGERIA FREETV SET-TOP-BOX IS UNIQUE

The Nigeria Freetv set top box or DTT decoder is unique in several ways because it is a freetv box that has a conditional access system (CAS) inbuilt in it. The benefit of the CAS is to provide security against theft, piracy and unauthorized production and distribution.

The CAS system provide avenue for easy collection of Digital access and TV/ Radio license fee by government. The box is embedded with the INVIEW middleware software that allows for full interactive TV experience such as Television (T)-Leaning, T-Commerce, T-Medicine, T-Government and T-Voting. The middleware also provides for children entertainment and Video On Demand (VOD). It is a freetv box build with the next generation in mind; providing over the air upgrade and activation. A major unique feature of the freetv box is its ability to operate as a ‘zapper’ and a PVR decoder; with a robust memory capacity, which is expandable through dongles or Flash-drive.

The T-Government Channel, The electronic program guide on Freeview will also function as a key information highway for News, public services information and Government interaction.

VIDEO ON DEMAND –VOD

- Freeview will enable viewers to Get Premium Pay TV If Desired
- Freeview will also provide a platform for Netflix style push VOD service, hereby creating a massive new distribution channel for Nollywood straight to the consumer
- \$250m+ pa increase in Nollywood income
- Curb piracy

ADVERTISING INDUSTRY REVENUE

One major benefit which the freetv box will provide is a leap in the radvertising revenue which hitherto has been bedeviled by lack of authentic audience measurement where Nigeria rank lower than Ghana. With the configuration of the freetv box, an authentic and reliable audience measurement data can be collected and Nigeria Adver-

tisement industry will reap the benefit of its large population.

Audience measurement system will help grow the Nigeria TV ad market to its comparator benchmarks to become a \$1 Billion Dollar market.

Other features of the Freetv set top box are in its engineering and design which is fully localized to withstand our electricity power supply system. The box is ergonomically beautiful and small in size with HDMI and Extra Flash drive slots. The box when fully configured will provide platform for Top Up TV option, OTT and 3G Wi-Fi. The freetv set top box is digi-ready to provide Internet connection to TV households even in remote villages thereby increasing Internet penetration especially in rural and poor disadvantaged areas and localities in Nigeria.



(ABUJA & JOS)

For easy access to your Gospell FREE TV signals, follow these short steps:-

1. Connect your Gospell Set-Top-Box to your Television
2. Connect your external local antenna TV cable to the back of your Set-Top-Box
3. Connect your Set-Top-Box to power supply and turn it on
4. Press the Ok "START" button to confirm that your Set-Top-Box is an official GoINGdigital product
5. After a scan, the information, "SERVICES DETECTED", will be displayed
6. Press "OK" to continue and your Set-top-box unique ID number will be displayed
7. To activate your first-year digital TV pass, text your unique ID number to 0909 996 6669 or call our customer care center on 0700 388 7277 or 096233530 and follow the instructions
8. If after a rescan your Set-Top-Box still has not been able to detect any channels, Please call 0700 388 7277 or visit www.freetv.ng to check your area for digital TV coverage
9. For Sales and Distribution Call 0803 670 0999, 0809 305 6751

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Sir Godfrey Oluwabunwa



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Analogue to Digital: THE JOURNEY SO FAR

By Engr. Eddy Amana



The journey that has brought us here today, for us in Black Africa, started about 12 years ago when in 2004, a Regional Radio Conference (RRC-04) for Region 1 of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) was held in Geneva. This Conference set out the Technical Parameters and the basis for a Regional Agreement for Digital Terrestrial Television Broadcasting in ITU Region 1.

Two years later – in 2006, a second Regional Radio Conference was again held in Geneva where the planning exercise which drew the digital plan for the ITU Region was carried out. These Plans were based on specified Digital Standards for Sound and Television Broadcasting and it covered specific Frequency Bands:

- The Upper VHF Bands
- All of the UHF Bands.

This Conference also resulted in the signing of an Agreement by all the Member States of the ITU in

Region 1. One of the key elements of this Agreement is that all Analogue Television Transmitters operating in the UHF Band must be Switched Off by June 17th 2015. This is the Agreement we refer to as the Geneva 2006 (GE-06) Agreement and Nigeria was a Signatory to it.

After the World Radio Conference of 2007 (WRC-07) in Geneva, the National Broadcasting Commission – NBC initiated the setting up of a Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) on the Transition from Analogue to Digital Terrestrial Television Broadcasting in Nigeria. This Committee submitted its report to the Federal Government on 20th June 2009, with a well defined Road Map that would have seen Nigeria completing the Digital Switch Over by 17th June 2012.

Unfortunately, because of political problems, Government could not address the recommendations of the PAC Report until late in 2012. It was only on 20th December 2012 that DigiTeam Nigeria, the Presidential Implementation Committee

to mid-wife the Transition was inaugurated .The Committee was inaugurated.

POLICY DECISIONS ON THE TRANSITION:

The White Paper on the Transition specified some Policy Decisions of Government on the Transition:

Separation of Functions in the Television Broadcast Industry:

1. Broadcasters will be responsible for the Content of their Broadcast
2. Signal Distributors will be responsible for the Transmission of the Broadcasters Content to Viewers at home
3. Maximum of 3 Signal Distributors to be Licensed ; One of which must evolve from the Transmission Facilities of the Nigerian Television Authority – NTA
4. Set Top Boxes to enable existing Analogue Television Receivers receive the Digital Transmission are to be Manufactured / Assembled in Nigeria.
5. The Video Compression and Transmission Standards were approved.
6. New Switch Over Date set at 1st January 2015.

MODIFICATIONS TO GE-06 AGREEMENT

Going forward from 2006 to 2012, there were tremendous developments in Digital Signal Processing, Video Compression and New Generation Digital Transmission Formats. The Telecommunication Industry was mounting a lot of pressure for the release of the upper UHF Spectrum to enable them deploy Mobile Broadband. These pressures resulted in the modifications to the GE-06 Agreement at WRC-07 and WEC-12, ceding first the 790 – 862 MHz Frequency Band in 2007 and 694 – 790 Frequency Band in 2012 for Co-Primary Allocation to other Services.

Because of these the RRC-06 Digital Plan had to be reviewed to move all Frequency Assignments' above 694MHz to within 470 – 694 MHz.

To benefit from the Economy of scale, the Dig-iTeam developed a Common ECOWAS Standard for Transmission, Digital Receivers and Set Top

Boxes for the ECOWAS Sub-Region.

In line with the Policy Decisions of Government, two signal Distributors, ITS and Pinnacle Communications Limited have started rolling out their Terrestrial Digital Television Transmission Network. A total of 13 Companies for the manufacture of Set Top Boxes were also approved and some of them have already started producing the boxes locally.

To protect the Investment of the STB Manufacturers in Nigeria, INVIEW Limited was contracted by NBC, amongst other services to provide Conditional Access Software. When you purchase your STB it has to be activated before you can receive the Digital Transmission. This way, STBs smuggled into the country will be blocked. An Abuja based Company, The Outsource Company –TOC has been contracted as Call Centre Operators. They have been up and running. They are handling STB Activation as well as taking any complaints regarding problems with your STBs.

JOS PILOT.

To get to Abuja a Pilot Study was carried out with the City of Jos as the Pilot City and Plateau the Pilot State. The Digital Switch On in Jos was successfully launched by the Hon. Minister of Information and Culture Alhaji Lai Mohammed on 30th April 2016, on the Platform of ITS.

The company Cable Channels Nigeria Limited (CCNL) is the appointed Signal Aggregator to brand the Free to Air Television Channels as a Free-View Bouquet on the Terrestrial Network. This they have done and branded it FreeTv. The company is currently utilizing SES Satellite Hub to backhaul Signals from the various Broadcasters on the FreeTv Platform to the Signal Distributors Transmission point



The AG. DG NBC Alheri Saidu with Engr. Amana



At the Jos Pilot 15 channels of programming are on offer with an Information Channel as the 16th channel. In Abuja, after the launch, 30 channels of programming has been on offer. I must not forget at this point to give my sincere thanks to the Government and my good people of Plateau State for the tremendous cooperation we received from them during the Pilot Programme. I must also commend the assistance to ITS by StarTimes in the Jos Pilot DTT Switch On and for their Pioneering Roll in Terrestrial Digital Pay Tv. Broadcasting in Nigeria.

SET TOP BOXES

For the persons at home, your Gateway to the new Digital Era is your Set Top Box.

As at today, STB Manufacturers have set up their Assembly Plants at the Calabar Export Free zone by Gospell Digital FTZ, Abuja – Idu Industrial Area, Lagos and Ogun States.

It is envisaged that when fully operational, each of these Plants will be employing a minimum of 2,000 personnel directly. We are therefore targeting a minimum of 26,000 Direct Employment from these Plants. There will still be the down-stream benefit of Distributors, Retailers and Installers of the STBs. Going forward from manufacturing of STBs; they will transit to the Local Manufacture of Digital Television Receivers and other Digital Devices.

In Abuja during the December 23, 2016, the Dig-iTeam rolled out on the Platform of Pinnacle Communications Limited. We are quite impressed with the quality of signals being transmitted. It would be recalled that by first week of July 2016,

the venue of the launch was a farm land filled with weeds and grasses.

However it must be reiterated that three major reasons contributed immensely for the failure of Nigeria to meet the ITU 17th June 2015 deadline:

1. Lack of commitment on the part of Government in the past
2. Lack of Funding
3. Lack of Synergy on the part of the various Stake Holders.

Now we have a Minister of Information and Culture who is passionate about the Transition. Some funding is now available through the pre-sale of a small portion of the Digital Dividend to now kick start the process.

In earnest, the Transition from Analogue to Digital Terrestrial Television Broadcasting in Nigeria is back on track. We hope and pray that going forward from here, we will get the support and necessary funding to enable us achieve our goals.

At the just concluded ECOWAS Regional Workshop in Abuja 12th - 13th December, the ECOWAS Committee on the Transition reconfirmed the June 2017 deadline for the ECOWAS final Switch Over.

We must therefore all work assiduously to ensure we succeed. I would like to commend the Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria BON who are the major beneficiaries of the Transition on their efforts in both sensitizing and training their operatives on the Digitization Process. I would also like to assure RATAWU that the Transition is to their benefit because the membership of the Union will multiply as more stations come on board.



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NTA TV ENTERPRISES

Pledges Quality Service Delivery

By Max Loko

NTA TV Enterprises has pledged to render quality service to broadcasters already on the Integrated Television Service (ITS) and those who would still come on board.

Speaking during the digital transition flag-off in Jos, Plateau State, Managing Director of the NTA TV Enterprises, Maxwell Loko gave the assurance, promising total commitment to service.

“To the Broadcasters who already are on the ITS Platform, and those intending to join, we pledge our total commitment to render quality service diligently and non-discriminately,” Loko said.

He said the flag-off of digital transition is a clear testimony that the hard work of all Stakeholders, particularly the Government and people of Plateau State, the NBC, and the DigiTeam has paid off.

He said the ITS has worked tirelessly in the five (5) months preceding the Jos flag-off to see the actualisation of the switch-on.

According to him, the ITS is driven by public good to ensure that every household in Nigeria, no matter where they live enjoy digital Television programmes of their favourite over-the-air terrestrial broadcast Free-To-Air.

Loko further disclosed that work is already on-going in Pankshin, Langtang and Shendam to ensure that the entire Plateau State is effectively covered.

Assuring the people of Plateau State that they will

begin to enjoy good quality television programming of both local and international content, he said the NTA for example, has put in place “a Multi-Channel Platform that meets individual needs. As we go digital, you will now be able to watch dedicated NTA Channels on News, Sports, Entertainment, Knowledge, Parliament, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, with crisp clear quality picture and sound.”

Recalling the launch of colour television broadcast in Jos more than three decades ago, he said: “I recall with nostalgia, more than three decades ago, young secondary school students of Government Secondary School Kuru near Jos, we always looked forward to sneaking to our teacher’s quarters to catch a glimpse of coloured television programmes beamed from NTA Jos.

“We were proud and happy then to learn that NTA Jos was the first of its kind in the West of Sub-Saharan Africa.

“It is with this same sense of pride and happiness that I stand before you today to be part of another history in the making – Our beloved Jos Plateau is recording another first – that is, first to officially go digital in Nigeria.”

He then assured that whatever unlikely teething problems that will emerge, would be temporary as they will be promptly and effectively addressed.

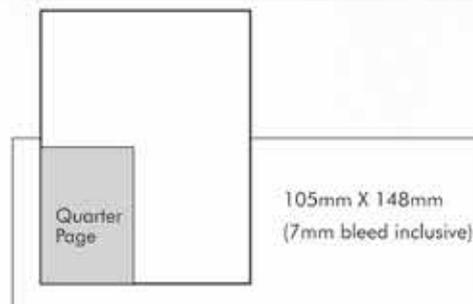
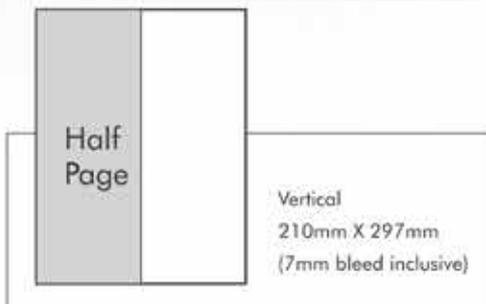
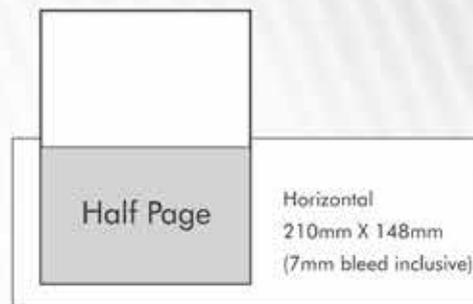
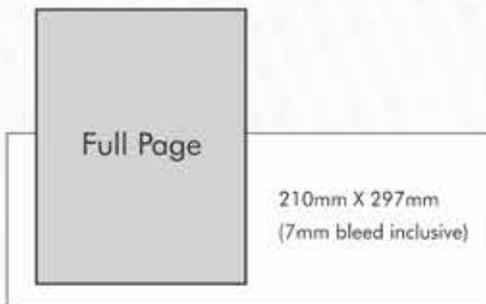


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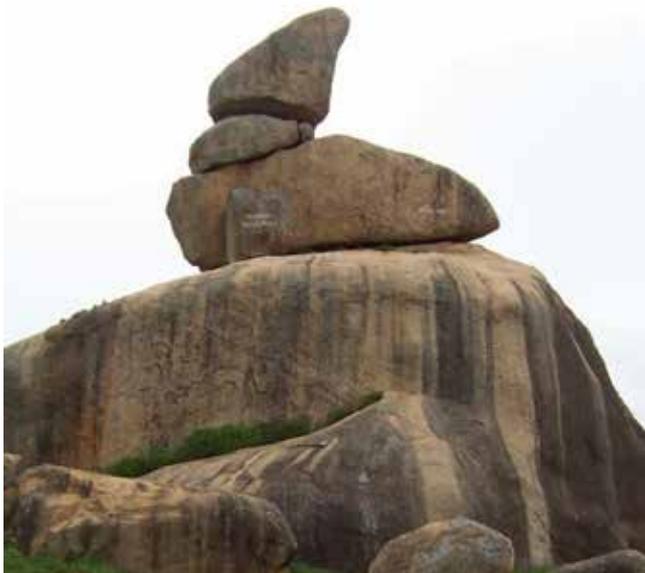
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PLATEAU STATE SCORES ANOTHER FIRST IN NIGERIAN BROADCAST HISTORY

By George Emine



Plateau State Scores Another First in Nigerian Broadcast History

Plateau State in North Central Nigeria scored another first in the history of broadcast in Nigeria as the transition from analogue to digital terrestrial television broadcasting in the country finally became a reality when on Saturday, April 30, 2016, the Honourable Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, switched on the digital transmission in a ceremony at the Government House Auditorium, Jos, Plateau State.

Recall that in 1976, the first colour television was switched on in the city of Jos.

In his speech during the digital transmission switch-on ceremony, the governor of Plateau

State, Rt. Hon. Simon Bako Lalong who was represented by the deputy governor, Prof. Sonny Gwanle Tyoden, stated that the state government did not relent in its efforts to drive the Digital Switch On, DSO project, and was always on ground to ensure that the DSO for the state was achieved.

He said the state government was pleased that the Federal government chose the state as a pilot state and was proud to associate with the project, adding that as a pilot state, the success of the DSO would be measured by the citizens' satisfaction.

Speaking during the ceremony, the then Acting Director General of the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, Ms. Alheri Saidu, stated that Nigeria, with this significant action, has transited into an era where the ordinary man can sit in the comfort of his home and choose from a variety of channels instead of the previous single channel, in addition to higher picture and audio quality.

She thanked the Minister of Information and Culture for his commitment and support to the NBC in ensuring that the country smoothly transited successfully.

In his presentation, chairman of Digiteam Nigeria, Engineer Edward Amana, gave an insight into the operations of Digiteam Nigeria, thanking the Plateau State Government for the support and cooperation given to the team, which has eventually manifested into a successful switch on.

On his part, Secretary General of the Commonwealth Telecommunication Organisation, CTO, pointed out that the Switch On was a major step forward in the broadcast industry in Nigeria, adding that the CTO was proud to be a part of this success milestone.

Currently 15 channels can be conveniently watched by viewers in Plateau State, while in Abuja the nation's capital, about 23 channels can be watched on the platform.

At least six other states will soon join the train in the full digitization process.

The Jos event had in attendance several other dignitaries including former Deputy Governor of the state, Dame Pauline Tallen; Chief Judge of the state, Justice Pius Damola; President of the Customary Court of Appeal in the state, Elder Statesmen, Royal Fathers, Directors in the NBC, CEOs of broadcast stations, Set Top Box manufacturers, managing directors of the News Agency of Nigeria, NAN, Nigerian film and Video Censors Board, NFVCB; as well as several other stakeholders in the broadcast industry.



AFRICAN COUNTRIES PLEDGE TO SPEED UP DIGITAL MIGRATION

By George Emine

Nigeria as well as other African countries have committed themselves to speed up the process of digital migration.

This was their position at the end of the 6th African Digital TV Development Seminar which held in Beijing, China in July 2016.

Speaking during the event, Nigeria's Minister of Communication and culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, said it is imperative for Africa to utilize the platform provided by digitization to leapfrog into the future of technology.

He said a successful transition would spin off benefits far beyond broadcasting, not just for Nigeria but for the entire African continent, adding that a timely and successful Digital Switch Over, DSO, would put many of the country's youths to work, provide the platform for their creativity to blossom, ensure technology transfer, and create opportunities far beyond what anyone can fathom now.

African ministers in charge of information and communication who Attended the forum, agreed on the need for a continental synergy and the

sharing of experiences in order to facilitate a successful switchover across the continent.

Stressing that a situation whereby only two African countries have so far successfully digitalized their broadcast industry does not augur well for the continent, Alhaji Lai Mohammed said many countries that have concluded their DSO, are already reaping the benefits accruing therefrom.

Stating that Africa cannot afford to lag behind for too long, the minister commended organizers of the forum for providing a platform not just for all those involved in the digitization process in Africa and china to interact and share experiences, but also for the representatives of the various African countries to interact.



STARTIMES, NTA PARTNERSHIP COMMENDED FOR REVOLUTIONISING TV VIEWING

By George Emine

The partnership between Startimes and the Nigerian Television Authority, NTA, has received commendation from the Minister of Communications and Culture.

The minister said the partnership has so far revolutionized television viewing in the country.

"We are very proud of our association with you, especially the partnership between you and the NTA," when he recently visited the headquarters of the StarTimes in Beijing, China.

Expressing gratitude to the chairman of the company, Mr. Xinxing Pang, over his stated plans to expand its operations in Nigeria.

The minister who undertook a guided tour of the Startimes headquarters, congratulated the company for the "giant strides" it had made in under 30 years of its existence.

Welcoming the minister earlier, Mr. Pang described the NTA as his company's most important partner in Africa, and that the Chinese firm is ready to invest more in Nigeria, especially in the area of content provision.

DIGITAL BROADCAST

While satisfying the need of Nigerians to knowledge as well as quality entertainment, digital switchover also has several economic benefits both to individuals and the government.

On Saturday, April 30th, 2016, the city of Jos, Plateau State, in the North-Central Region of Nigeria came alive as the launch of the pilot phase of the digital broadcasting switch on took place in the city, kick-starting the final digitization process in broadcasting in Nigeria. The event was quite remarkable as two previous switchover deadlines have been missed.

While stressing the significance of the event, Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed took time to underscore the economic benefits that will accrue to Nigeria and Nigerians. The target is 30million viewers across the country, thereby making Nigeria the biggest Free TV market in the world.

“This is a monumental event, because with the switchover, we are revolutionizing the broadcast landscape and architecture, as well as the local, state and national economy. More importantly, we are democratizing the right to knowledge, and the right to be informed. This is simply because with what we are doing today, the average Jos person does not need to pay subscription to watch the best news and entertainment from around the world, and with high quality sound and high resolution picture, which are equal, if not superior, to any in the world,” Lai Mohammed stressed.

Before the launch, the average Jos person could only watch at best five (5) TV channels, except he subscribes to pay Television. But currently, he has access to at least fifteen (15) channels, local

“

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and international news, as well as local and foreign entertainment. And unlike in the past, even while watching a particular channel, using the Electronic Program Guide, EPG, he can further check to know other programs available on that channel, or even on other channels without necessarily exiting the channel he is watching.

In a bid to maximize the economic benefits of the digitization process especially at a time when the emphasis is on economic diversification, the federal government promptly mandated all licensed Set Top Box manufacturers to establish manufacturing companies in Nigeria so that after importing the first set of boxes, subsequent ones will be produced locally. This would create massive employment and at the same time ensure the transfer of technology for Nigerians who would work in the manufacturing plants. The transition will also trig-



ger a chain of retailers and installers of the Set Top Boxes, with a huge impact on the local economy. In addition, there will eventually be an astronomical increase in the need for content, thereby challenging the creative ability of millions of Nigerian youths.

According to the minister, the switchover will become the needed panacea to the menace of piracy that has so far bedeviled the music and movie industries. Explaining how this would work, he says: "This is because musicians and movie producers will be able to release their works directly to the platform, where they can be purchased, thus wrong footing those who have been pirating their works."

While thanking the Plateau State government for their support, as well as the 'Digiteam' and the Ministerial Task Force for their uncommon commitment, selfless service and patriotism, Alhaji Lai Mohammed also called on local and state governments to assist by buying the boxes which the Federal Government has highly subsidized.

On its part, the Federal Government has in addition to the subsidy, given out free of charge, about 200,000 boxes for the pilot phase, just as Plateau State government agreed to purchase

300,000 boxes for their citizens.

For the city of Jos however, the launch of the pilot phase holds much more meaning. This is because three dates are significant in the history of television in Nigeria – 1959 when the WNBC launched the first TV Station in Africa; 1976 when the first color TV was switched on; and now 2016 when the final transit from analogue to digital broadcast is launched.

Assuring Nigerians that this time digital switchover has come to stay, the Honorable Minister declared: "When we came about six months ago, we found that everyone seemed to be working at cross purposes and the postponement of the pilot scheme seemed inevitable. But we said no, especially because we have missed two previous switchover deadlines. We put our shoulder to the wheel and here we are! Now we are ready to go from city to city until we have covered the entire length and breadth of our country by the June 2017 deadline."

So, for millions of Nigerians, going digital goes beyond better access to information, education and entertainment. It means increased opportunities for job creation, employment, and wealth creation. It is killing several birds with a stone.

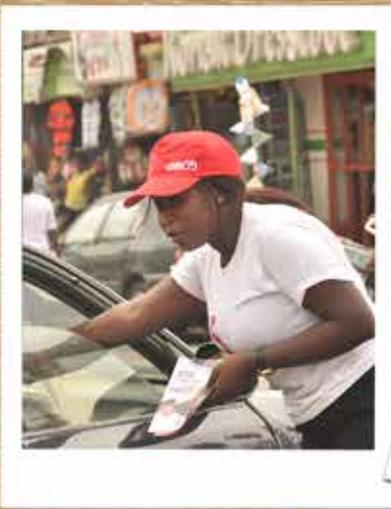
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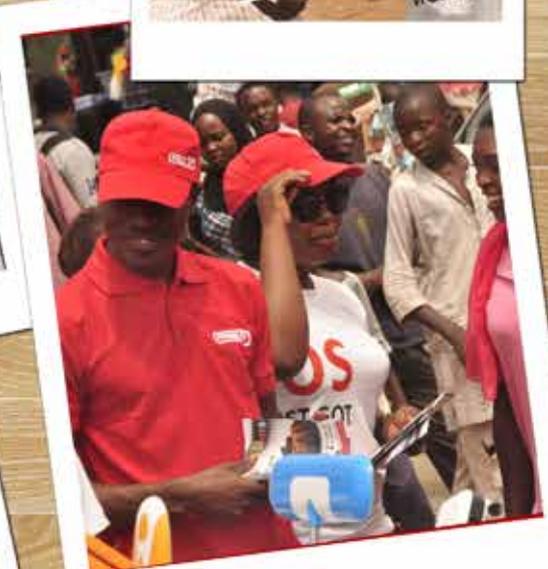
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KAWU REPOSITIONS NBC TO PATH OF PROFESSIONALISM

By George Emine

The Director General of the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, Mallam Is'haq Modibbo Kawu has said he is committed to sanitising the agency and repositioning it to the path of professionalism.

Kawu whose appointment took effect from May 25, 2016 has in less than one year of his tenure done so much in repositioning the NBC to achieve greater results.

During his inaugural speech, he said his coming into the commission would restore it on the path of professionalism, as the agency under him would follow the laid down procedures in regulating activities in congruence with the national broadcasting code.

He promised to do his best in sanitizing the system, adding that the new framework would make the process work the way it is supposed to, and that professional broadcasters would be happy that one of them had come to lead the industry.

"I think Nigerian broadcasters should know one of them is leading the institution. I went to work in the old Radio Nigeria from February, 1st, 1977. I think my colleagues in the business should be happy that one of them has come to lead the institution that regulates the industry. I hope that I would be able to get the cooperation of our colleagues so that we can actually make Nigerian broadcasting go back to being the best that it was in the African continent.

"The tradition used to be very high. The standard was impeccable. When I went to work in broadcasting, we met an incredible institution and I think we can still go back there. My duty is to lead the process that would help us to that kind of process of development," the NBC boss said.

On Digital Switch-Over, DSO for the broadcast industry, Kawu informed that the process remained seamless, saying his administration would remove

all barriers to drive the process.

“The process is on, there is a timeline. My duty is to lead the process to ensure that Nigeria gets it right. We are going to do everything to ensure it is done properly and whatever controversy that might arise in the process, we will do the very best to ensure that we remove them so that Nigeria can actually meet the international time line to do digitisation of broadcasting in our country,” he said.

Striving to achieve the new deadline for DSO, work has already commenced in Kaduna in the North-West, Kwara representing North-Central, Gombe in North-East, Enugu for South-East, Osun for South-West and Delta for the South-South, as the six states to join Plateau and the Federal Capital Territory in the ongoing digitisation process. Making this known in a communiqué issued at the end of one-day Broadcast Stakeholders meeting held in Abuja on Tuesday, March 7, Mallam Modibbo-Kawu said that 70 per cent of contents in the DSO are local, assuring that the collection of TV and Radio License fee would be gathered together to support content production. The NBC has already announced that it has commenced the installation of facilities in Kaduna State.

According to him, the DSO would help deepen the democratic process in Nigeria and access to freedom of information and feedback. He also said the NBC would engage the Nigerian Governors Forum, NGF, in the digitization process. Before his appointment, Mallam Kawu who hails from Kwara State, was the Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of the Abuja-based Word, Sound and



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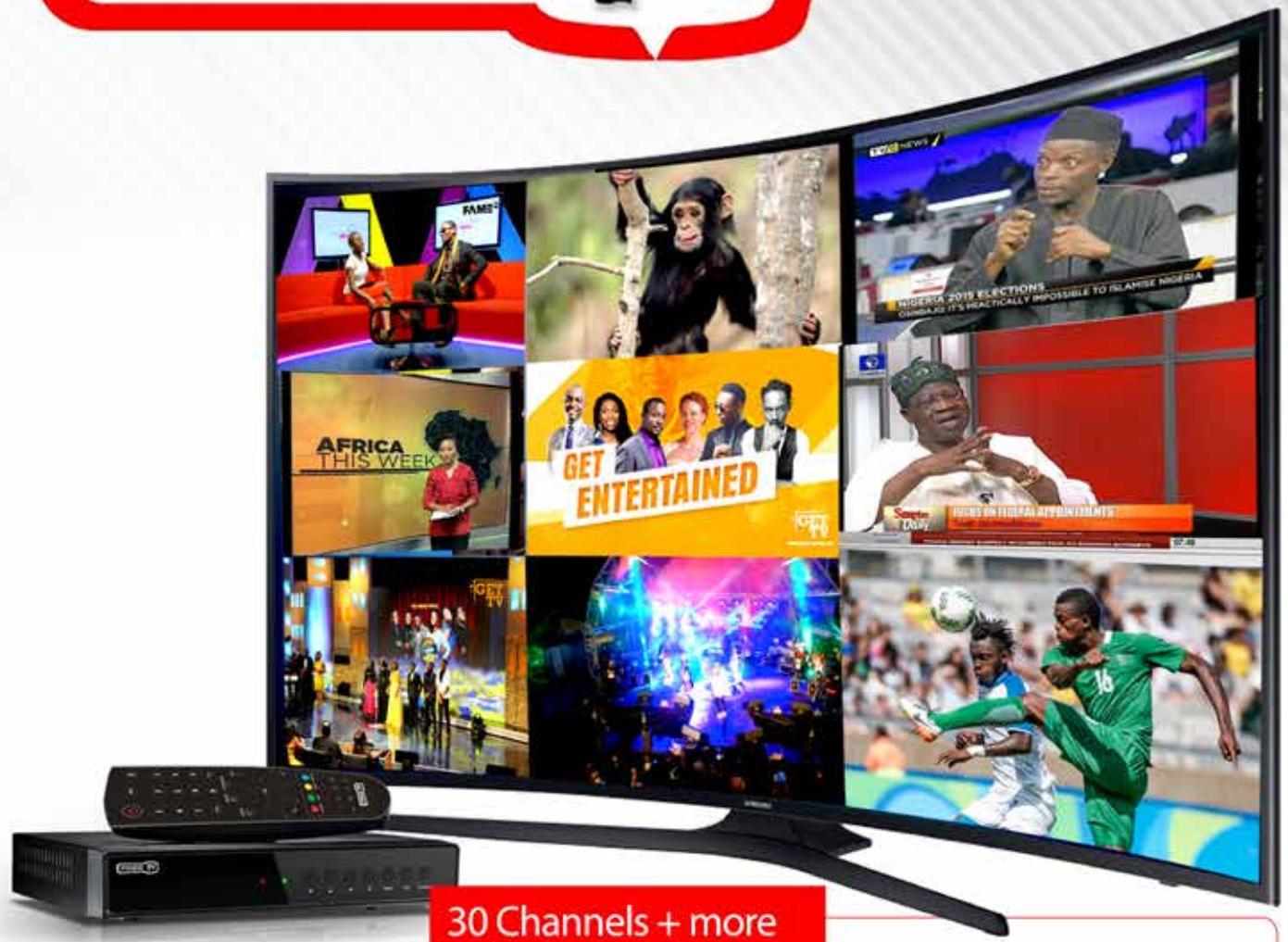
He has 37 years of broadcast experience spanning both radio and television. He was among the pioneer staff of the Radio Kwara and was pioneer General manager of Kwara State Television Service. He has also had a stint with international radio and has reported for Radio France International, Radio Netherlands and the BBC World Service.

He is also a prolific contributor in the print media, with regular columns in the Vanguard and Leadership newspapers, in addition to being at some point, editor and later Chairman of the Editorial Board of the Daily Trust Newspaper.



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