

## Minister's Statement at the last night's launch of the Digital Migration Task Force

REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

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Please find below an electronic copy of the text of the Hon. Minister of Communications Science and Technology's statement at last night's launch of the Digital Migration Task Force. Due to the minister becoming ill, the statement was delivered by the Ministry's Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Festinah Bakwena.

The event was attended by the Hon. Speaker of the National Assembly, members of Ntlo ya Dikgosi and industry stakeholders.

The Task Force is headed by the Chairperson of the National Broadcasting Board (NBB), Dr. Masego A. Mpotokwane.

[START] STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE PELONOMI VENSON-MOITOI MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AT THE LAUNCHING OF THE DIGITAL MIGRATION TASK FORCE IN GABORONE (GICC), TUESDAY 28 APRIL 2009

[Salutations]...Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. Several years ago in Geneva, the International Telecommunications Union, (ITU) resolved that broadcasting transmission should move from analogue to digital within a specified period. This change was necessitated by the rapid development in the technologies that drive the Information Communication sector in a broad sense and specifically the broadcasting industry. The date that was agreed for region one, being Africa and Europe was August 2015. By this date it is anticipated that all countries should have moved all their broadcasting services, especially television to the digital mode.

2. As we speak many countries in Europe and Asia have already moved to the digital mode of broadcasting. Some like the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Finland and Sweden have switched off their analogue transmission while others like Germany, the UK will be switching off this year. In other parts of the world countries like Australia, New Zealand, Japan, China, South Korea, Singapore, Canada and Hong Kong are in the process of switching over. Here in Africa, Mauritius was one of the first countries to go digital while in South Africa, the process of switching over was officially launched in November last year and is expected to be completed in 2011. It is therefore important to note that this migration is not an option but an obligation.

3. The most important question in many people's minds is why do we have to change our mode of transmission and why do we have to care about this? The simple answer to this is that digital transmission presents greater opportunities for information communication service delivery than analogue. With this technology we are able to have six times more channels of broadcasting than we have with analogue. Secondly the migration results in availability of more spectrum as broadcasting services moves from frequencies which were hitherto allocated for

analogue transmission. This means other services can be licensed to use such spectrum. This is known as digital dividend.

4. I must also point out that as one of the signatories to the ITU resolution, we are obliged to effect this migration in our country. Failure to do so by the stipulated time could result in the country not being able to benefit from some of the digital services that are on offer around the world. Most importantly, television services which have not migrated to digital by the stipulated times will not be protected from interference by other digital services if any occurs. In other words priority will be given to digital services.

5. The other important fact is that as consumers of technology, we are obliged to move to digital transmission because the manufactures of the equipment we use for broadcasting will no longer be making analogue equipment and thus we may find ourselves in a lurch with outmoded technology without any spares or replacement parts.

6. Why do we have to care? As you may be aware, moving from digital transmission will directly affect how we receive our signals. The TV sets we use in our homes were made for the analogue era. Therefore they will not be able to receive digital signals. As a result it is important to inform the public to prepare for this migration so that they are not caught unaware. It is also important to alert people so that they do not become victims of unscrupulous retailers who would sell them equipment that would either very soon be obsolete or fake digital equipment.

7. It is for this reason that I have mandated the Digital Migration Task Force to spearhead this migration process. The Task Force will advise me on issues such as policy, technical standards and other issues that need to be taken into consideration during this migration process.

8. Bagaetsho, I wish to appeal to you to support this team in any manner you can. Many of you here represent different constituencies both political and social. I am appealing to you to spread the message. The Task Force has a website on which information will continue to be made available on key issues affecting the migration. I urge you to use the resource to inform yourselves.

9. With those few remarks, it is my honour to officially launch the Digital Migration Task Force. PULA...!