



**Report on a one-day workshop
on Digital Broadcast Migration
in Nigeria¹**

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Introduction

The migration to Digital Broadcasting has been a subject of discussion especially in Africa. There are several issues which should be considered in digital broadcast migration. Such issues border on regulation, market potentials, models and strategies for successful migration, regulation and content. Nigeria is of particular interest in Africa as it has the largest potential market for digital broadcast in Africa.

The Association for Progressive Communications (APC) and Balancing Act, with support from the Open Society Institute (OSI), is undertaking an initiative which looks at the benefits and challenges that come with the transition to digital broadcasting in Africa.

As part of this initiative, a workshop which would bring together key stakeholders will consider issues in digital migration and explore areas that would be of interest to the National Broadcasting Commission and the Federal Ministry of Information and Communications.

This report contains the proceedings of the recently concluded workshop on Digital Broadcast Migration in Nigeria.

Briefing of Journalists and the Press

An invitation was extended to members of the Press for a press briefing on 27 June 2011. The essence of the briefing was to discuss the issues surrounding Digital Broadcast Migration and to interact with the Journalist. The briefing commenced at about 10:00 a.m. after the participants concluded the registration process. Altogether, 32 media practitioners were registered for the press briefing.

The briefing commenced with short welcome message by Kelechi Emekalam, who led each participant to give a brief introduction of themselves and the media organizations they represent.

The Digital Transition: Behind the issues – Russell Southwood

The first presentation was by Russell Southwood. The objective of the presentation was to provide an overview of the issues which must be considered in establishing a digital broadcast regime. The presentation provided an overview of the history of digital broadcast and highlighted some issues such as the cost to consumers and broadcasters, the advantages in terms of services and economic benefits as well as the technical aspects.

Apart from the issues mentioned above, the presentation covered Policy and Regulatory issues which would include subsidies for cost to consumers, territorial coverage and stakeholder participation within the entire process. In building a road map for the way forward, the presentation noted that if Nigeria must beat the deadline date of global digital broadcast migration, it is expedient to start the process on time and avoid the last minute syndrome, as in some other countries, the process has taken the 3 to 14 years to transit from analogue to digital transmission. Furthermore, a task force approach may be required and as such the private sector cannot handle it alone, hence the need for the government

and regulators to initiate a policy paper after wide consultation with stakeholders, and set up a task force or Committee to see the programme through to a logical conclusion.

At the end of the presentation, Mr. Southwood entertained some questions from the participants. Some of the questions raised include:

- The average cost of setup boxes to Nigerians;
- Cost sharing models recommended for Nigeria including the issues of subsidy;
- The peculiar needs of the Nigerian broadcast environment; and
- The current position of Digital Broadcast migration in Nigeria.

Digital Broadcast Migration in West Africa: An overview and strategies to accelerate the transition– Russell Southwood

After a short tea break, the second presentation was made to the participants. The presentation provided some statistics on the current state of play of digital transition in Africa. 5 countries have publicly launched the digital migration programme including Nigeria. 10 countries have launched limited pilot programmes, while 14 others have started the process. 24 countries were yet to commence the program.

The presentation noted that the period to the deadline was too short for some countries to successfully migrate within the deadline. In concluding, the presentation highlighted a checklist for the Digital Transition Process which would include:

- Policy paper
- Policy paper considered by stakeholders
- Setting up of a Committee or Task Force
- Drawing up of Implementation plan and timetable
- Establishment of Cost subsidy strategy
- Public enlightenment strategy
- Launching of a Pilot
- Dual illumination launch
- Public communications Strategy rolled out
- Switch off of analogue

Challenges of Reporting on Digital Broadcast Migration - Remmy Nweke, Senior Reporter/Head, ICT Champion Newspapers Ltd.

Next was a presentation on the challenges of reporting on Digital Broadcasting in Nigeria. The presentation noted the history of broadcasting in Nigeria up till the deregulation of the broadcast sector in 1992 and the establishment of the National Broadcasting Commission, charged with the responsibility of regulating broadcasting in Nigeria. Since the deregulation of the market, the broadcasting stations in Nigeria have risen to 394.

The presentation also highlighted on the powers of the Commission and its responsibilities. The presentation highlighted the following as the challenges of broadcasting in Nigeria:

- The current broadcast environment is plagued by copyright infringement otherwise known as piracy and this is a disincentive to investment in content creation.
- There is a dearth of human capital in the creative and production sector of the industry.
- There is a shortage of platforms for the exploitation of the content before it is available to the broadcaster thus making the cost of acquisition unduly high.
- Access to funds for the creation of content is challenging because of the low level of awareness of the potentials of the creative industry, by the financial sector.
- Foreign direct investment in the creative industry is low as a consequence of the overall investment climate in the country.

The National Broadcasting Commission is currently addressing the above challenges so as to stimulate investment in the Broadcasting sector in Nigeria. The bidding process for the licensing of Radio and TV broadcasting Networks is one of such efforts in that direction.

On the basis of the foregoing, the presentation recommended that:

- There should be a well-set out and thought out structure of media engagement via professionals either by engaging in-house staff versed on media relation or engaging private sector based professional entities.
- National Broadcasting Commission should conduct training sessions for media practitioners in the country, especially for those on the line of reporting/covering the digitisation and broadcasting in Nigeria.
- There must be a way of ensuring that people in government are held accountable to the public/media
- A mailing list of those interested in covering the digitisation migration should be created so as to regularly share information
- Face to face meetings should be encouraged by inviting government officials to face the media for interactions even if it is quarterly, especially now that we have Freedom of Information Law in place.

- There should be a convergence of relevant government ministries, departments and agencies, especially those regulating to make things easier and decision and even channel of media engagement better.
- Reporters interested in covering this issue on digital migration must themselves try to become digitally empowered as having a mobile phone is not a holistic digital empowerment, it goes beyond that.
- Reporters can also form a common front to this effect to create relevant awareness and public engagement to drive the message.
- The National Broadcasting Commission should improve its public relations, especially with the media

In concluding his presentation, Mr. Nweke expressed dissatisfaction with the slow pace of digital broadcast migration in Nigeria especially on the side of the government.

The briefing session for the journalist came to a close at about 3:00pm.

One-Day Workshop On Digital Broadcast Migration In Nigeria

The workshop started at about 10.30am after the accreditation of all participants.

Russell Southwood commenced the discussions by providing an overview of the presentations at the press briefing for the benefit of the participants who did not attend the press briefing. The overview and discussions lasted for 40 minutes after which the participants went on break.

Digital Broadcast Migration in West Africa: Nigeria Research Report. – Fola Odufwa (presented by Emmanuel Edet).

Mr. Edet presented a research report indicating the indices of digital broadcast migration in Nigeria. The report which is sponsored by APC and Balancing Act provided the participants with an overview of the current state of digital broadcasting in Nigeria. The report among other things highlighted the doubts and concerns of the stakeholders, the state of policy development, some statistics on facilities of digital broadcasting in Nigeria as well as the regulatory environment in Nigeria.

Stakeholders Perspectives and Concerns on Digital Broadcast Migration. – Chukwuemeka Okereifo

The presentation identified the major stakeholders in the migration process to include:

- Government – Policy Makers, Regulator,
- Broadcast Companies/Stations,
- Broadcast Equipment Manufactures,
- Investors,
- Civil Society/NGOs,

- The Viewer/Listener (Consumers) and the Audience.

While highlighting the concerns of NGO's and the average audience, the presentation noted as follows:

- With less than three years to the national analogue switch-off date broadcasters and consumers alike do not have the basic information required for a smooth transition.
- Broadcasters in the country are not mobilised or galvanised for the digital project, little wonder many are ignorant even of the 2012 date and have not begun to address the 'what', 'how', 'where' and 'who' of the transition process.
- That there is also a misconception in official quarters which sees digitisation only from a television perspective.
- The high cost of the process for both for governments and citizens and it is not really clear what the benefits will be or where the resources needed to make the transition will come from
- The problem of obsolete broadcast equipment – cost on independent producers and consumers invariably
- That the new dawn of broadcasting technology must be accompanied by a responsible code of conduct by all players
- Appropriate broadcast content
- As well as Environmental Issues

In concluding the presentation made the following recommendations:

- The process should be made a national priority
- Proper Information and education should be generated for the benefit of all stakeholders
- All stakeholders and players in the Broadcast industry including the civil society, consumers and media practitioners must be actively involved in the entire process from policy making to the actual migration process stating that the problem of subsidy should also be topmost on the minds of stakeholders.

After the session, Participants then proceeded for Lunch break.

Engaging the media in the Digital Migration Process in Nigeria – Segun Oruame – Editor Itedge News.

The final presentation after the lunch break was made by Mr. Segun Oruame of ITedge Newspapers. In his presentation, he noted the information gap in the process and expressed the need for the managers of the process to keep all stakeholders informed throughout the process. He explained the in other jurisdictions, specific and deliberate efforts are made to disseminate information properly and get all stakeholders involved. Mr Emmanuel Edet gave a general overview and wrap up of the entire event and thanked participants for taking time out to attend the media workshop.

Key Issues and Challenges

The Workshop participants there after went into a group discussion to identify the key issues and challenges which Digital Broadcast Migration faces in Nigeria. The following issues and challenges were identified by the participants:

- i. One of the key issues which was mentioned was awareness on the part of the consumers. The participants noted that there was poor engagement of the stakeholders especially the consumers who know little or nothing about digital broadcast migration;
- ii. Another key issue which serves as a challenge in Nigeria is bureaucracy. The participants noted that the period of time which it takes for government to act on policy matters is inordinately long and as such Nigeria is at risk of missing the deadline for the switchover;
- iii. Another issue discussed was the environmental issue. The workshop participants noted that digital broadcast migration would involve the introduction of new equipment and disposal of old ones. Some of the old equipment would eventually become electronic waste materials and Nigeria has not definite policy on disposing of electronic waste. This may be hazardous to the environment.
- iv. The issue of cost of the broadcast equipment itself and the content services were also discussed. The workshop noted that fact that the cost of purchase of set top boxes may exclude some consumers from enjoying the services of digital broadcast. Also it is unclear if the content after migration would be free – to air. Going by the existing arrangements for Star-times/NTA Network, this may not be the case. This again would place additional burden and would exclude some consumers.

Mr Emmanuel Edet gave a general overview and wrap up of the entire event and thanked participants for taking time out to attend the media workshop.

QUESTIONS/ CONCERNS / COMMENTS

- Is a Set Top Box the same thing as a Decoder?
- What would advertisers look out for since all stations would now have the same reach?
- Can ITU collaborate with governments of nations who are signatory to the convention and equipment vendors to reduce the cost of set-top boxes as the ordinary Nigerian is barely able to afford 3 square meals a day?
- Should ITU not be considering the cost implication of Migration so the initiative would not chase low income stations out of business?
- How would stations with low coverage cope with this digital migration: how would it affect them both positively and negatively?

- Could Digital migration not affect the dissemination of broadcast information to a large number of viewers negatively?
- What are the best possible ways to finance the cost of Set-Top Boxes to make it easily affordable to all.
- The deadline set by ITU; how beneficial is it to Africans? Why should all regions of the world be bound by the same deadline?
- Is this transition not just creating a market for the western interests who produce equipments?
- The digital transition process is more tasking to analogue tv owners. Why should they be forced to change their systems completely if that's all they can afford?
- Creating better Content would be very challenging how can the broadcast media work towards doing this as the competition would be very stiff.
- With barely 3 years left to the Analogue switch-off date, Several African Countries have not even started any process as regards this digital transition. Is a time extension not inevitable at this point?
- Will the advent of Digital Migration completely end free-to-air broadcasting?
- What is the best model for handling e-waste that would be generated as a result of Digital Migration?
- How does the shared transmission work?
- NTA/ Star Times has set the pace in Nigeria and it is hoped that others would follow suit

EXPECTATION FROM PARTICIPANTS

At the end of the workshop the participants expressed appreciation for the workshop and indicated the following as expectations for the future on the issue of Digital Broadcast Migration issues from Nigeria:

1. Government should engage the media more in publicity key issues/challenges; addressing the issue;
2. The Policy framework for Digital Broadcast Migration should be approved by the Government urgently;
3. Digital Broadcast Migration should also include the print media who in all intent and purposes may soon migrate their activities to a digital environment, the online environment.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS FOR MONDAY, JUNE 27, 2011

S/N	NAME OF PARTICIPANT	ORGANISATION
1.	NSIKAK EVANS	RHYTHM 94.7 FM
2.	SAMUEL OGIDAN	THE COMPASS
3.	HELEN AUHUTU	COOL FM
4.	BETHRAND NWANKWO	LEADERSHIP
5.	ADEOLA TUKURA	PEOPLES' DAILY
6.	CHUKS UKWUATU	LAGOS TELEVISION (LTV)
7.	YEMI DANIEL	EKO FM
8.	MARIAM ZAKARI	INDEPENDENT TELEVISION
9.	NKECHI ISA	ASO RADIO
10.	LAWRENCE OKOJIE	TELEVISION CONTINENTAL
11.	DAPO OKUBANJO	TELEVISION CENTINENTAL
12.	FOLASHADE ABDULSALAMI	MITV
13.	MUSTAPHA ENISEYIN	MITV
14.	EVEREST AHAMEFULA	THE PUNCH
15.	TEDDY NWANUNOBI	EDUCATION MATTERS
16.	DAOSUR IWAMBE	TVC
17.	LAIDE AKINBODE	VANGUARD
18.	NGOZI OBOH	NEXT NEWS
19.	MURI SHEHU	DBN TV
20.	KEMI MUSA	DBN TV
21.	EDO CHARLES	NEWS PEG

22	PAUL GALADIMA	ITV
23	AFOLABI WAHAB	LAGOS TELEVISION
24	ADALUKIU OLUGBENGA	THE NATION
25	OBI DAIROJI	GALAXY TELEVISION
26	DESMOND KOLAWOLE	GALAXY TELEVISION
27	NKECHI ONYEDIKA	GUARDIAN
28	ADANNE MGBENWA	ZEET DAILY
29	NNABUCHI OKEY	GALAXY TELEVISION
30	FUNKE OGUNLOLU	

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS FOR TUESDAY, JUNE 28, 2011

1.	FOLASHADE ABDUSALAMI	MITV
2.	YEMI DANIEL	EKO FM
3.	DESMOND KOLAWOLE	GALAXY TV
4.	ENGR. SHUAIB ADAMU	NTA
5.	BETHRAND NWANKWO	LEADERSHIP
6.	LAIDE AKINBODE	VANGUARD
7.	ZAKARIYYA ADARAMOLA	DAILY TRUST
8.	NKECHI ONYEDIKA	GUARDIAN
9.	NSIKAK EVANS	RHYTHM 94.7 FM
10.	AYO OGUNTADE	LTV
11.	NELSON OSAS	TVC
12.	ENGR. J.A. TURNER	NTA
13.	DOOSUUR IWAMBE	TVC
14.	KUNLE OLASANMI	BLUEPRINT
15.	ANGBO PIUS	LAGOS RADIO/ EKO FM
16.	FUNKE OGUNLOLU	RAY POWER FM
17.	EVEREST AHAMEFULA	PUNCH
18.	SHEHU MURI	DBN TELEVISION
19.	KEMI MUSA	DBN TELEVISION
20.	SAMUEL OGIDAN	COMPASS
21.	EDO CHARLES	NEWS PEG
22.	NKECHI ISA	ASO RADIO

23	ADANIKIN OLUGBENGA	NATION
24	AIKULOLA E. K	FEDERAL MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION
25	HELEN AUHUTU	COOL FM
26	MAIRAM ZAKARI	INDEPENDENT TELEVISION
27	PAUL GALADIMA	INDEPENDENT TELEVISION
28	CHUKWUEMEKA OKEREAFOR	LMDI
29	MUSTAPHA ENISEYIN	MITV
30	EZEKIEL AYODEJI	TVC
31.	ECHÉ EUCHARIA	GALAXY TELEVISION
32	M.T. AHMED	FEDERAL MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION
33	UKWUATU CHUKS	LTV
34	FRED IDEHAI	LTV