

Kenya meets global digital migration deadline

Kenya joined the community of nations that have successfully migrated from analogue to digital television broadcasting, whose deadline was 17 June 2015.



Image via [123RF](#)

ICT Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i hailed Kenya's success in the process that has been dogged by a myriad of challenges, mostly legal battles that ended in the Supreme Court.

Matiang'i however said Kenya's experience was not unique as the same has been the case in other countries. "Financial constraints, lack of political will and industry resistance have decked many jurisdictions and we are glad that we have managed to overcome," said Matiang'i at a press briefing ahead of the global switchover deadline.

More than 2.5 million households in Kenya have acquired a set top box and now enjoy the benefit of digital television with more expected to migrate to the digital platform. More than 3.5 million set top boxes have been imported into the country.

The Cabinet Secretary said TV viewers and the industry were today already reaping the fruits of migration. The Authority has collectively licensed more than 79 set top box vendors, more than 70 broadcasters, 50 of whom are on air and created more than 2,500 jobs.

The Public Signal Distributor, SIGNET is currently expanding TV coverage to areas of the country that previously did not enjoy TV reception such as Kitui, Lamu, Lodwar, Lokichogio, Maralal, Marsabit, Mbui Nzau, Wajir, Kabarnet and Garsen.

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Secretary General Houlin Zhao said the deadline for the switchover marks a historic landmark in the transition from analogue to digital television broadcasting. "The process, which began in June 2006, has re-envisioned the way the world watches and interacts with TV and opened the way for new innovations and developments in the broadcast industry," said Zhao at a workshop on the global status of the migration.

Digital TV broadcasting offers many advantages over analogue systems for viewers, operators and regulators such as interactive TV, electronic programme guides and mobile TV as well as transmission of image and sound in high-definition (HDTV) and ultra-high definition (UHDTV). Migrating to the digital broadcasting platforms frees up scarce frequencies which will be deployed to provide other services such as mobile broadband.

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