

Zimbabwe's shift to digital broadcasting

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Zimbabwe is fast migrating from analogue broadcasting to digital, in compliance with demands by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) to switch from analogue broadcasting to digital by 2015.

The country has intensified its digital broadcasting campaign following the successful inaugural Africa Information Communication Technology Indaba held in Cape Town, South Africa, earlier this year, in which a resolution was passed to ensure that all African member states must comply with the international directive to conform to digital.

Director of urban communications in the ministry of media, information and publicity, Anywhere Mutambudzi, said that although funding had been a major constraint, the Zimbabwe government was tirelessly working towards complying with the international ITU directive.

Mutambudzi said of the 24 broadcasting transmitters in the country, the last four to be put up were already digitally compliant.

"We are looking at expanding the current broadcasting transmitter network to 48 sites, a development that will see the coverage of the whole territory of Zimbabwe," Mutambudzi said.

He added that although there had been fears that many people were not aware of the impending digital changeover, as they continued to buy analogue receivers, there was no need to worry as the region had plans to minimise the negative impact of the process.

"All they will need is a set-top box (STB), which is a decoder to change the signal from analogue to digital and when mass produced, this box can cost as little as US\$20.

"The region will collectively come up with a way of producing STBs that are regionally compliant. There will be need to establish a manufacturing plant for those boxes within the region," said Mutambudzi.

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