

# Tanzania digital tech crawling

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The Tanzania government is still grappling with its insistence that the country switch from analogue to digital broadcasting before most of the country was ready on 31 December last year.

The deputy minister for Communication and Science Technology, January Makamba soon came to the rescue with a directive that saw the switching off of the analogue technology be done in phases.

He said to start with Dar es Salaam and then move to other regions of Mwanza, Arusha, Tanga, Dodoma and Mbeya in the months that follow.

According to the minister, the migration of analogue to digital in phases was the only way that was going to give viewers of other regions enough time to prepare.

However last week the government said in a press statement availed to East African Business Week that it was not reversing its stand of switching to digital transmission.

The government through the Minister Communication, Science and Technology, Makame Mbarawa said in a press statement that all the relevant stakeholders were fully involved in the process leading to the shift, and none had challenged the government decision.

The minister said that the global deadline for the migration as given by the International Telecommunication Union is 17 June 2015, but East African Community member states agreed on a much earlier date, although Kenya, Uganda and Zanzibar have all postponed, citing a number of stumbling blocks. These countries were also supposed to make the shift on 31 December 2012.

Professor Mbarawa said that the Media Owners Association, during a recent meeting in Dar es Salaam, had asked the government to revert to analogue broadcasting. He said this was aimed at undermining the digital migration process for their own self-interests and it may confuse the public on the importance and relevance of digital broadcasting.

He said that it was important for the government to let investors in digital broadcasting infrastructure continue with their investment in order to let the public know that the age of analogue broadcasting is over.

Tanzania has so far seen the operation of at least four digital broadcasting companies that includes Zuku, a Kenyan digital broadcasting company; DStv, a South African company which are both pay TV with Star Times owned by a Chinese firm,

Ting owned by local channel ATN television; and Digitech locally licensed to operate in Tanzania.

Despite the fact that Tanzania has so far three locally licensed digital broadcasting corporations, many Tanzanians still find it hard to access information through digital technology due to the costs that are involved which includes monthly subscription fee.

A random survey made by East African Business Week in Dar es salaam over a month discovered that as life in Dar es salaam becomes more and more hard to locals, a number of residents still find it hard to be connected with digital broadcasting as they battle for the electricity, water and house rent bills that has increased tremendously in recent years.

Kephaus Mapunda, a Tabata resident says it is now becoming harder for a lay man to have to settle electricity, water and house rental bills with the increased hardships.

"We normally choose to forgo digital broadcasting despite its importance in giving us information, says Mapunda, adding that the government would have set the minimum fee for the fee and decoder if it was to be serious about access to information to its public"

Last week's statement by the government of not tolerating any group or individual bent on distorting facts about undermining the digital migration comes as the Media Owners Association of Tanzania (MOAT) claim that more preparations were needed for the country's digital migration.

MOAT has often been heard in its meeting claiming that there were more Tanzanians who have been left without access to information through the radio and Television due to new arrangements of the digital migration.

MOAT chairman, Reginald Mengi said during a media stakeholders meeting that they were not opposing the digital migration but rather there was need to create low- income earners to have access to information through radio and television.

He said that about 75% of Dar es Salaam residents no longer have access to TV broadcasts, as only a fraction of the 7 million Dar residents and its environs owning TVs have managed to buy decoders.

Source: [allAfrica](#)

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