

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



RWANDA UTILITIES REGULATORY AGENCY

PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN ON TERRESTRIAL DIGITAL BROADCASTING

Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Agency has launched its Public awareness campaign on digital switchover whereby the workshop attracting high profile Government officials was organized at SERENA HOTEL on 26th November, 2009.

In its welcoming remarks, the Director General of RURA told the participants that, following the decision made by the International Telecommunication Union, (ITU) in which the Republic of Rwanda is a member, all member states are required to switch off analogue systems which are currently used in broadcasting by the year 2015 and switch on to terrestrial digital broadcasting. However, the meeting was told that, despite the date set by the ITU, the East Africa Member states have decided to switch off analogue networks by the year 2012; three years earlier than that of the ITU in order to give enough time the member states to examine and address any constraints and challenges that may be encountered in the migration process before the year 2015. The Director General noted that, since broadcasting is a very useful and powerful tool for mass communication, any changes in the way it is managed, operated and received has great impact to the society and therefore these changes need to be communicated properly. He further explained that, this is the beginning of the series of the awareness campaigns which RURA is intending to undertake.

The Opening remarks were given by the Director General in the Ministry of information on behalf of the Minister. In the opening remarks, the Minister underscored the decision by the ITU of migrating from analogue to terrestrial digital broadcasting. She said that, migrating to digital is no longer a choice but an obligation of the country. She continued by saying that, the Government will provide any support needed to ensure that Rwanda migrates to terrestrial digital broadcasting as soon as possible and meet the deadline set by the East Africa Member States. She further said that the Ministry is working very closely with ORINFOR, which has been given the responsibility of becoming the national signal distributor.

The chief engineer of ORINFOR told the workshop that, ORINFOR is planning to switch on soon to the terrestrial digital broadcasting, and the calendar of switching off analogue networks, province after province, will be communicated to the Public.

The followings are the recommendations made by the participants:

- The participants agreed that, there is a need for conducting a series of Public awareness campaign using electronic media and any other means of communication to educate the society on these changes
- The participants noted that, human capacity development is a necessary tool which must be emphasized and undertaken in any technological changes
- The participants pointed out that, ORINFOR needs to operate commercially to fulfill its obligations of becoming the signal distributor. The signal distributor will need to be a subsidiary company so that it can be effective to undertake signal distribution business.
- The participants noted that, for quick take up of digital broadcasting, the consumer receivers for digital broadcasting specifically Set Top Boxes are the main drivers for expediting the migration process. It is therefore recommended that, Government need to subsidize the cost of the Set Top Boxes.