PRESS RELEASE ON DIGITAL TERRESTRIAL BROADCASTING

Digital broadcasting set to transform the communication landscape by 2015

The Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) on 16 June 2006 signed a treaty agreement at the conclusion of ITU's Regional Radiocommunication Conference (RRC-06) in Geneva heralding the development of all digital terrestrial broadcast services for sound and television

The treaty signed by Professor John S. Nkoma, the Director General of TCRA and Head of Tanzania delegation to the conference, represents a major landmark in digitizing broadcasting in Africa and in Tanzania in particular and provides a framework for the establishment of a more equitable, just and people centered information society.

The digital switchover will leapfrog existing technologies to connect the unconnected in underserved and remote communities and close the digital divide.

The RRC-06 that started on May 15, 2006 ended on June 17,2006

The most important achievement of the Conference "remarked Mr Yoshio, Secretary General of ITU, that the new digital Plan provides not only possibilities for structure development digital terrestrial broadcasting but also sufficient flexibilities for adaptation to the changing telecommunication environment".

The agreement reached at RCC – 06 paves the way for utilizing the full potential of information and communication technologies to achieve the internationally recognized development goal. The date of transition to digital terrestrial broadcasting in the year 2015 intended to coincide with the targets set by the millennium Development Goals.

The regional agreement for digital services has reached in the frequency bands 174 – 230 MHz and 470 – 862 MHz. It marks the beginning of the end analogue broadcasting.

The Conference agreed that the transition period from analogue to digital broadcasting which begins at 0001 UTC 17 June 2006 should end on 17 June 2015, but some countries preferred an additional five years extension for the VHF band (174-230 MHz)

The Region Radio communication Conference was chaired and brought to successful conclusion by Mr. Kavouss Arasteh the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The digital dividend

The switchover from analogue to digital broadcasting will create new distribution networks and expand the potential and multimedia data making application, services. The digital dividend accruing from efficiencies in spectrum usage will allow more channels to be carried across fewer airwaves and lead to greater convergence of services.

The inherent flexibility offered by digital terrestrial broadcasting will support mobile reception of video internet and multimedia data, making application, services and information accessible and usable anywhere and at any time, it opens the door to new innovation such as Handheld TV broadcast (DVB-H) along with High –Definition Television (HDTV) while providing greater hand width to existing mobile, fixed and radio navigation services. Services ancillary to broadcasting (Wireless microphones, talk back links) are also planned on national basis and need extended.

The World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-07) , which will meet in the autumn of 2007, will deal with the regulatory aspects of the usage of the spectrum of these services.

Terrestrial digital broadcasting carries many advantages over the analogue system.

- Expended services
- Higher quality video and audio
- Greater variety and faster rates of data transmission.
- Consistency of data over long distance
- More spectrum efficiency means more channels

This important agreement which paves the way for a new paradigm of wireless digital communication technologies, is expected to be extrapolated by other regions and countries and influence a global shift away from the analogue system that in place for the past 45 years.

During the five weeks of deliberation which began on 15 May RRC -06 took decisions to allow iteration of the compels software tools used by the ITU secretaries as basis to generate the draft plan that will facilitate the coordinated and timely introduction of digital broadcasting. The plan assures that an outstanding 7,500 digital broadcasting requirement including station, will become a reality within the planned area. It succeeds in creating a level playing field as a new for competition.

The first session of this Conference (RRC -4) took place in May 2004 and established a solid, comprehensive and technical basic for the agreement, including the framework for the intersessional studies. It has already resulted the accelerated introduction of digital terrestrial broadcasting in many countries "Digital technologies are now transmitting
high –resolution images of the Soccer World Cup from Germany to fans around the world who are watching the matches with excitement "said Mr. Utsumi "Digital terrestrial broadcasting is now reality with a bright future.

A complex process

Conference Chairman Mr. Kavouss Arasted said that RRC –m 06 was technically complex process comprising voluminous computational calculation and data processing task, electronic document handling and ht e use of five working language. He added that ITU, although facing these challenges for the first time, could provide the Conference with adequate technical and regulatory expertise and support for the full satisfaction

More than 100 delegates representing 104 countries met in Geneva to adapt the treaty agreement that will replace the analogue broadcasting plans existing since 1961 for Europe and since 1989 for Africa. The new digital plan, based on broadcasting standards know as T-DAB (for sound) and DVB (for TV), covers a wide area of the worlds including Europe, countries of the CIS, Africa Middle and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

A major challenge faces by the conference was to find ways for digital and analogue broadcasting to co-exist on the radio- frequency spectrum during the transition period without causing interference.