

# digital dialogue

CONFERENCE

## **SWITCH OFF TO SWITCH ON THE ECONOMY:**

### **Global experts review digital migration**

**Dubai, UAE (May Day, 2018)** – The Digital Dialogue Conference 2018 facilitated by MultiChoice concluded with a panel discussion offering first-hand insight into the successes and challenges associated with the transition to digital terrestrial television broadcasting in Africa, ranging from international coordination, standardisation, regulation, harmonisation and the broader economics of spectrum management and digital migration.

The expert panel consisted of Gerhard Petrick, *Deputy Chairperson of the Southern African Digital Broadcasting Association (SADIBA)*, Michèle Coat, *Radio Communication Engineer at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)*, Peter Barnet, *Chair of CM-WiB at Digital Video Broadcast (DVB)* and Greg Bensbert, *MBE, General Manager of Digital 3&4 at ITV*.

### **The transition to DTT in South- and Southern Africa - has DTT delivered on what was promised? - Gerhard Petrick, SADIBA:**

“Good progress has been made by selecting and implementing the most advanced and spectrum efficient technology for terrestrial broadcasting. However, significant work remains in yielding the digital dividend, with only a few SADC countries having cleared the dividend bands”, Petrick offered in his opening remarks.

Furthermore, Petrick illustrated how network costs can typically be derived and stated that Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) cost per service should be substantially lower than analogue network costs.

From a consumer value proposition, Petrick confirmed that the digital networks offer better video quality and audio in the interest of the consumers, although most deployments are Standard

Definition (SD) instead of High Definition (HD). “There is still potential for more services to be accommodated for the networks that are currently on-air” he remarked.

### **The ITU’s view on the transition to digital broadcasting - Michèle Coat:**

Coat stated that the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) facilitated the planning of the migration to digital and the co-ordinating spectrum requirements. This included a follow-up to the Geneva 2006 (GE-06) conference to plan the digitisation of broadcasting and associated frequency use for 119 countries in Europe, Africa, Middle East, Central Asia.

She confirmed that the remainder of the UHF band (470-694 MHz) is earmarked for broadcasting for the foreseeable future whilst the digital dividend (694-862 MHz) bands to be released in the switchover from analogue to digital TV will play a critical role in delivering broadband wireless access.

### **A perspective on the transition to digital - Peter Barnett (DVB):**

Barnett gave a review of new developments in DVB - the industry-led consortium of about 160 of the world’s leading digital TV and technology companies, drawn from broadcasters; telecommunications network operators; regulators and manufacturers who collectively draft the satellite system standards.

Peter also shared an update of the DVB including DVB-S2X which offers Extended SNR (C/N) range, Finer granularity from additional MODCODs, Additional roll-off values, Channel bonding. And will be available for DTH from early 2018. He also mentioned DVB-SIS - Single Illumination System- a cost efficient delivery of DVB broadcasts onto IP networks and will use 1 transponder to feed both terrestrial transmitters and DTH receivers. The new offering was originally developed for satellite, however, it can also handle terrestrial and cable formats. Also in the new development pipeline is DVB-I (terms of reference approved in Feb 2018) which is set to provide a user perception of a linear TV channel, discovered and consumed over the open internet. Further developments in this space include updates on RCS2 (Return Channel on Satellite); Satellite beam hopping; Low latency IP delivery, updates on Simulcrypt headend, Emergency Warning System, Targeted Advertising and more which are available on [www.dvb.org/about/process](http://www.dvb.org/about/process) for the full work plan.

### **The Broadcaster’s perspective – Gregory Bensberg, MBE (ITV):**

Has the transition to digital been a success for broadcasters? And how did the transition to digital change the TV universe? Along with the questions, Bensberg also gave some insights from his digital migration work as a key technical and regulatory adviser to UK Government Ministers during the switchover and future demands of technology changes.

Using the UK's 2005 Analogue Switchover (Digital Migration) as a case study, Peter shared that after migrating to digital, all public service channels in the UK became available to all viewers with more than 20 other new channels created, e.g. Sky News. The migrations also extend the channels' reach with the government cost-benefit analysis (in 2005) revealing a net benefit of around £2bn to the UK.

Bensberg also shared his insights on how digital migration has allowed broadcast services to better compete with emerging platforms. "The adoption of digital technology has dramatically changed the TV industry in all markets where it has been adopted. The initial response of the content owners to the threat posed by the internet was to revert to legal challenge, either through direct litigation (as in Napster) or via government response creating new laws (as in the DCMA and Digital Economy Act). However, broadcasters have since moved to offer their own content on-line and increasing are aiming to build on their existing platforms to offer a hybrid service to viewers, such as Freeview Play," says Bensberg. He also adds this has allowed them to offer an official route to accessing their content which they can monetise and gave them control over the branding and prominence of their services.

Gerhard Petrick concluded the panel discussions by stating that digital migration is a vital natural resource and any delays would have long-term consequences to the economy: "The opportunity cost of not yielding dividend bands has a significant negative impact on countries which haven't implemented digital migration. These bands will play a critical role in providing broadband wireless access and allowing citizens to participate in the economy".

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**Gerhard Petrick – Deputy Chairperson of the Southern African Digital Broadcasting Association (SADIBA)**

Gerhard is the Head of Department: R&D, Shared Services in the Broadcast Technology Department at MultiChoice in South Africa and serves as Deputy Chairperson of the Southern African Digital Broadcasting Association. Gerhard has worked in a variety of engineering and ICT-management fields, served as Councillor of the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa and contributed to South Africa's successful bid to host the international square kilometre array radio telescope. He has more recently worked in engineering management of satellite- and terrestrial PayTV with a focus on team management, link budgets, network planning, frequency- and spectrum management, standardisation, end-to-end testing, service level agreements, interference mitigation and technical training. Gerhard holds a National Higher Diploma in Electrical Engineering from Technikon Witwatersrand, a B.Tech Degree in Business Administration from Technikon South Africa. Peter Barnett – Chair CM-WiB at Digital Video Broadcast (DVB)

## **Michèle Coat – Radio communication Engineer at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**

Michèle is a Radiocommunication Engineer. She has been working in ITU since 1984, in the Terrestrial Services Department, based in the development of Terrestrial Software Applications relating to Spectrum Management. She was a member of the BR Technical Secretariat at RRC-04 and RRC-06 for the Planning of the digital terrestrial broadcasting service in parts of Regions 1 and 3, in the frequency bands 174-230 MHz and 470-862 MHz. She then joined the Broadcasting Division in the BR in 2012 and was a member of the BR team assisting Sub-Saharan Africa and the ASMG ITU Member States in the frequency coordination process to facilitate the release of the digital dividends.

## **Peter Barnet, *Chair of CM-WiB at Digital Video Broadcast (DVB)***

Peter graduated from Imperial College, London in 1976, and began his career in broadcast technology with the Independent Broadcasting Authority. After periods with NTL, NDS and Tandberg Television, in 2003 Peter started his own consultancy business with a focus on digital switchover. He has carried out studies for government departments, and provided training for regulators. He also developed a continuing education course on DTT at the University of Surrey, and for several years was a director of the UK's Digital Television Group. Peter has been a regular supporter of the DVB Technical Module, and was a member of the Steering Board for approaching 20 years. He is a vice chair of the Commercial Module, and chaired the group that developed the commercial requirements for DVB-S2. He is currently chairing the Study Mission Group looking into commercial aspects of WiB.

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## **Gregory Bensberg - General Manager of Digital 3&4 at ITV**

Gregory is the General Manager of Digital 3&4 which manages the broadcasting of ITV and Channel 4's digital terrestrial services in the UK. He has previously worked as a policy and technical expert at Ofcom and the Independent Television Commission for over 20 years. Gregory acted as a key technical and regulatory adviser to UK Government Ministers whilst they were developing the UK government's switchover policy. He was also responsible for leading Ofcom's spectrum clearance programme (800 MHz and 2.6 GHz); which the UK's 4G spectrum auction in 2013. Gregory led the planning and licensing of the UK's digital switchover programme including its UHF spectrum strategy) and its adoption of the DVB-T2 standard and the launch of terrestrial HD services in 2009 and also led Ofcom's Digital Dividend Review project in 2005/06 which laid out the process and principles for the eventual European digital dividend programme. He is a chartered engineer and holds an MBA and BSc. He was honoured by Her Majesty the Queen for his work in communications and media by being made an MBE in 2014.

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## Note to Editors:

- For more information, please visit [www.multichoiceafrica.com](http://www.multichoiceafrica.com) and follow the social media conversation on the hashtag #DigitalDialogue2018 and tag Instagram: MultiChoice Africa; Twitter: MultiChoiceAF; Facebook: MultiChoice Africa.
- **Images of the speakers and the event will be available on request.**

### **Speaker Bio: Yolisa Phahle –Video Entertainment CEO, MultiChoice**

Born in the United Kingdom, Yolisa's first foray into the entertainment industry as a classical pianist and violinist in London and later joined the Island Record's Reggae Philharmonic orchestra as one of the founding members before working alongside some of the biggest names in popular music like Duran Duran, and Soul II Soul. She joined the world of television with BBC World Service in 1998 before moving to BBC 6 and later gained more experience in presenting, sound and vision mixing for the BBC. Her love for African music saw her return to South Africa in 2004 where she joined M-Net as head of Channel O. In 2009, she became channel director for the local entertainment channels where she was instrumental in driving M-Net's local content strategy. She was appointed as M-Net SA CEO in 2013 before taking over the reins for the M-Net business across the African continent in October 2015. Since 2013, M-Net has expanded its local content focus with flagship local channels for Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and a new channel planned for Uganda later this year. The Africa Magic and Mzansi Magic channels also continue to perform extremely well across Africa. In November 2017, Yolisa was appointed CEO for General Entertainment for the Multichoice group. In this role she will co-ordinate a content strategy that will deliver the best international content to DStv and GOtv subscribers whilst increasing the focus on local industry development and local story telling.

### **About the Digital Dialogue Conference:**

The 2018 Digital Dialogue Conference is a thought leadership platform facilitated by MultiChoice Africa in order to foster a better understanding of the future direction of the video entertainment industry in Africa. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the conference which was established in 2012 to create a better understanding of Digital Migration and its impact on Africa's digital landscape. Since then, the independent and growing platform has been critical in fostering a better understanding and building knowledge on video entertainment and Digital terrestrial markets while creating necessary conversations with thought leaders about various industry-related issues.

### **About MultiChoice:**

Entertainment is a powerful way to tell stories that open our minds, bring people together around shared passions, and connect us to new realities. It makes us laugh and cry. It informs, it educates and it inspires. MultiChoice is a video entertainment company, and our role is to enrich lives. Our mission is to deliver value to our customers by making great entertainment more accessible. We find and develop the right mix of content and deliver it to millions of people across Africa – anytime, anywhere. Whether it's local telenovelas, the excitement of world class sport or the latest global blockbusters, our investment in leading-edge content and technology systems deliver the shows that people love into their hands and their living rooms. We listen to our customers to understand their changing lives, the pressures they face and what matters most to them. We are committed to using these insights to put customers at the heart of all the decisions that each of us make every day. We're reshaping our business to improve our customers' experience, whenever and wherever they engage with us. Born and bred in Africa, MultiChoice is a team of more than 2750 full time and over 14 thousand contractors and independent agencies and accredited installers who collectively deliver the greatest entertainment in the world to more than 49 countries across Sub-Saharan Africa. We are managed and run by local people, and strive to provide all our employees with new opportunities. We're proud of the contribution we make to our communities, and our business has grown hand-in-hand with local

economies by forging long-term partnerships with governments, national broadcasters and entrepreneurs. As the continent's leading funder of sport and local production, we've built skills and capacity to become the backbone of content that matters to our customers. As Africa continues to change rapidly, the entertainment industry is ever more relevant. We want to use our influence and resources to play a positive role in Africa, helping to grow Africa's people and creative industries into vibrant, economic powerhouses. It's by creating value for our customers, our employees and society that we'll build a successful business for the future.