Mr Sven Thieme, Chairman of NBC

Other Directors present

Management and staff

Colleagues from the media

Today is a momentous day in the history of the broadcasting world globally and indeed in the annals our history as a country. Today marks a new and radical beginning in Television broadcasting in our country and the region. It is indeed the dawn of a new day heralding in a new birth in our house. The Namibian house.

On 2 December 2013, in this very studio facility my predecessor officially launched the technical roadmap for Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) which marked the start of a long road to modernise our television broadcasting and viewer experience.

Allow me to make a couple of remarks by way of sketching our other technological achievements as a country.

Firstly, our connectivity to the West African Cable System (WACS) presents us with unprecedented opportunities to connect out country and her people to the world. This platform also enables us to ensure that all our people, rich and poor, enjoy the fruits of the much heralded and talked about Information Age. We cannot afford to have a society of “technology haves” and “Technology have nots”. All role players have to find space and time for us to create the technologically inclusive future for all Namibians in our lifetime.

Secondly, Namibia boasts some of the best mobile penetration rates in Namibia, African and the world. Our mobile data services are reportedly amongst the cheapest in Southern Africa making us the third cheapest on the sub-continent. Again, the next evolution along that trajectory of good progress is the opportunity to offer cost-effective rural data services that include the poor as well. Rural and urban dwellers are all Namibians and have to be served in the same manner wherever possible. Our schools and community centres also need due consideration for inexpensive data access and we have to move fast and spread the good news of cheap data services enjoyed in Namibia.

Thirdly, and closer to this morning’s event, we are amongst only 3 Southern African countries to celebrate a major broadcasting milestone. We promised SADC, ITU and the world that on 17 June 2015 Namibia would offer 67% of its population with a digital TV signal and that was our internationally accepted target to meet as well.

Fellow Namibians, I am a proud member of this Namibian family when I say that we stand at 70% population coverage with DTT. Next week I will be hosting fellow Ministers of ICT and Postal Services in Walvisbay and I assure you that we will be walking tall like a giant that we are in Southern Africa as we report on our progress.

We have to thank the men and women who worked tirelessly to make all this possible. I wish to express our profound gratitude to my predecessor, his deputy, colleagues at the Ministry of ICT who drove the policy frameworks and laid a solid foundation for us all to build on further. CRAN as the regulator who ensured fair play and existence of rules within which we must roll the technologies out are also duly recognised and thanked. There was a Board of Directors and a management team who took the proverbial bull by its horns and tamed it. Sven and team we thank you for a job well done. Our technical teams worked numerous hours on this roll-out round the clock and with minimal holidays. I am reliably informed that the nbc technical team performed their routine and daily functions of maintaining the existing network whilst managing to roll-out a state-of-the-art broadcast network at the same time. This is indeed a remarkable feat and worthy of emulation across all SOEs. It speaks of selfless dedication to service for the nation. Thanks colleagues for all the hard work. To Huawei Technologies who partnered with us on this journey, we also express our gratitude. International solidarity and partnerships have their place and this project has ably demonstrated that fact.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, allow me to express and reiterate our view of the technological future for Namibia. As I have said earlier and on numerous platforms since 21 March 2015, our technology has to be enabler of knowledge production, transfer and sharing amongst all citizenry. The technology migration we celebrate therefore must enable us to create, produce and tell the Namibian story in a manner that celebrates our diversity as a country. We have many channels now on NBC and those have to be populated with Namibian stories. We know that this will cost money and require careful planning. As a Ministry we are absolutely committed to engage in relevant dialogue with all role-players to bring our stories to the NBC screens.

Let us join hands in this march towards a future where one day when our children ask the question:

*“****Dad, Mom, what did you do when NBC moved from Analogue to Digital TV broadcasting?****”*

We can confidently acclaim on the top of our voices:

“***I lend a helping hand to tell the Namibian story”*** It is our story. It is our pride as a people. It is our celebration on 17 June 2015.

Allow me to, therefore, declare NBC’s Digital TV officially switched on and Analogue Television committed to the dustbins of history.

I thank you