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REPUBLIC OF GHANA

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20th September, 2018

### **PRESS RELEASE**

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

The Ministry of Communications (MoC) wishes to provide the following information in response to recent media reports on two of the Ministry's projects which have been misrepresented.

The two projects;

(a) National Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) infrastructure and

(b) 300 Communities Satellite TV Project

are two distinct projects which are not interrelated.

#### **DTT PLATFORM**

The DTT project is an infrastructure development project which is aimed at providing a Digital transmission backbone to facilitate Ghana's migration from analogue to digital transmission. The Project is owned by the Government of Ghana and is to be operated by the state owned company specially established for the purpose.

Work has been completed on Phase 1 of the project leading to a provision of 40 Digital channels currently in use. Phase 2 of the project requires an expansion of the network to up to 60 channels

to bring the total number of channels to 100. Building an enhanced infrastructure for both transmission and content is in line with government of Ghana's commitments to bridge the rural and urban digital divide.

The Ministry of Communication has been in consultation with stakeholders at various stages of this project and intends to continue consultation with all industry players.

The next DTT engagement session with the Ministry of Information, Ministry of Finance, National Communications Authority, Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, Creative Arts Industry and content producers, Ghana Institute of Engineers, Media Commission, Chamber of Telecommunications, K-NET, Consumer Protection Agency and the Parliamentary Select Committee on Communications is expected within the next ten (10) working days.

The engagement will address amongst other things:

- Digital Switch over (DSO) roadmap
- Management of the DTT Platform
- Current draft DTT policy
- Status of the DTT Infrastructure
- Enhancement of the DTT network

The Ministry wishes to state emphatically that it has in no way committed to and does not intend to hand over the management of the DTT infrastructure platform to any third party. The DTT infrastructure platform shall be managed as a commercial entity incorporated as the Central Digital Transmission Company Limited (CDTCL) governed by a board (Representatives from GBC, Creative Arts Industry and content producers, MoF, MoC, GIBA, the C. E.O of the CDTCL and the Board Chair).

The selection of a contractor and financing options for any aspect of the project ought not to be interpreted as an intention to hand over the ownership and management of the platform to any third party.

### **300 COMMUNITIES SATELLITE TV PROJECT**

The Satellite TV Project will enable 300 settlements across the country have access to satellite television. It is an Africa-wide project which will provide the same service to 10,000 communities in 25 African countries.

- The 300 community satellite TV project is expected to benefit 6,000 households drawn from 300 communities nationwide. The project is another giant step aimed at helping our citizens to access TV information on national and international events and programmes that would educate, entertain and inform them; thereby increasing their awareness and knowledge to improve their welfare.
- The official launch of this project is on Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018, at Akweibu near Dansoman Estates.
- A service provider; StarTimes, has been working with the Ministry of Communications and various districts and regional representatives to identify the 300 settlements
- Apart from the 6,000 households, 900 public viewing locations will be connected through two solar powered satellite projector TV systems and 32-inch television sets for free.
- The project will create an opportunity for selected local youth to be trained in providing maintenance support services for the communities, and will provide jobs to over 1000 Ghanaians.
- The project is also expected to serve as a source of education and information for students, as well as provide television entertainment for the wider audience with dedicated channels for promoting local content.
- The Parliament of Ghana earlier this year, approved tax waivers only for the specific equipment, devices/terminals for the project.
- It is worth noting that, several other satellite TV service providers exist already in the Ghanaian media landscape.
- We notice that some commentators and media reports have confused the two projects and ended up concluding that the Ministry has handed over the DTT project to a Chinese company StarTimes to operate. The reports further suggest that StarTimes has been

granted tax waivers for the purpose and is to utilize the 300 Community TV Project to advance that enterprise.

- For the avoidance of doubt, we wish to state that this project has no correlation or link to the DTT project currently underway.

In conclusion,

The national DTT platform is separate from the provision of the satellite TV project for the 300 communities.

The Ministry has not reneged on its framework for managing the DTT platform and wishes to reiterate that, the ministry has no intention of allowing StarTimes or any foreign entity to manage the platform.

We will continue to work with all stakeholders and contractors to build the most cost –effective and robust infrastructure; and create the right ecosystem to ensure that the interests of viewers, broadcasters and content providers are protected.

Thank You.



**Mrs. Ursula Owusu Ekufu**

**Minister of Communications.**