

Information Minister, Sandra Falconer said that government was committed to protect consumers against buying television sets that will be obsolete in 2015; the year that Jamaica has adopted for digital switchover (DSO).

Addressing the opening of the Inaugural Digital Broadband Switchover Caribbean Forum in Antigua, on August 13, Minister Falconer said: "We must sensitise the public to the reality of dumping and the need to avoid expending limited disposable incomes on the acquisition of analogue television sets and other communication devices which are destined for obsolescence."

Minister Falconer gave her regional colleagues an update on Jamaica's activities towards DSO noting that the process started in 2003 and included government agencies, holders of broadcasting and subscriber television licenses, and appliance retailers.

She said that government will continue to engage with stakeholders around the following key issues including: television presentation format; transmission standard; a licensing framework; funding conversion to digital; analogue switch-off objectives and public broadcasting.

"I reiterate the need for regular engagement with industry in the DSO process. In March this year over 40 technical personnel from the subscriber television and broadcast television sectors in Jamaica met to deliberate on the technical aspects of DSO. The continuation of this type of discourse must be an important feature in the approach to DSO planning," Minister Falconer said.

Digital switchover generally referred to as the process by which nations will stop delivering broadcast, cable and satellite content using analogue technology, and instead use digital technology. Digital broadcasting delivers improved images and sound and allows countries to free up the radio spectrum for a wider range of productive uses.

The regional forum is organised by the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO), the Caribbean Broadcasting Association (CBA) and the Caribbean Broadcasting Union (CBU); in collaboration with the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU), and the

Caribbean Association of National *Telecommunication* Organizations (CANTO).

The Broadcasting Commission's Executive Director, Cordel Green, and a representative of the Media Association of Jamaica, Mr Gary Allen of the RJR Group, are also making presentations at the meeting, which ends on Friday August 17.

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