

NAMIBIA, BOTSWANA, ZAMBIA AND ZIMBABWE AGREE TO ROAMING PILOT PROJECT TO LOWER ROAMING CHARGES

10 August 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN) and Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) hosted senior officials from Government, National Regulatory Authorities, national mobile operators, and policy makers from Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe at the picturesque Heja Lodge from 5 to 6 August 2015.

The meeting stems from the SADC Ministers responsible for Communications, ICT and Postal Services, meeting which was held in Walvis Bay on 26 June 2015. Participants at this meeting reaffirmed their commitment to the implementation of the SADC Home and Away Roaming (SHAR) glide path. The meeting was hosted by CRAN and chaired by Mr. Mbeuta Ua-Ndjarakana, Permanent Secretary of the MICT.

“Regional mobile telephony roaming plays a strategic role in accelerating regional integration, and economic development in the SADC Region, thus this meeting aimed at fast tracking the implementation of the approved SADC road map in line with the decision of the ICT Ministers on SADC Home and Away Roaming”, and to initiate the pilot project that will see the four countries enter into a bilateral agreement on the basis pertaining to the SADC Home and Away Roaming Project”, said Mr. Mbeuta Ua-Ndjarakana, Permanent Secretary of the MICT.

The meeting resolved on some key matters pertaining to the pilot roaming project:

1. The pilot project will commence among all the operators of the four countries, namely (Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe) by 01 September 2015. This will be done on a bi-lateral basis between the four countries mentioned.
2. All mobile operators of the four member states participating in the pilot project should commence making the necessary arrangements to implement the glide path as agreed at the meeting including amending their bi-lateral roaming agreements (in particular the inter operator tariffs for all roaming services).
3. Wholesale and retail tariffs will be reduced annually in line with the glide path as approved by the SADC ICT ministers.
4. Operators will not be forced to go into reduced tariff agreements with operators in countries that are not participating in the pilot project. However, other Member States wishing to participate in the project prior to 01 October

2015 are welcome to participate and mobile operators should engage with their respective mobile roaming partners to ensure their participation.

5. Operators of the four Member States will not have to reduce their roaming tariffs again come 1 October 2015.

6. The project on the harmonised cost study for wholesale tariffs as adopted by the SADC ICT Ministers at their meeting in Walvis Bay, Namibia will continue.

7. Quality of Services is very important and therefore roaming customers should experience the same quality of service as national customers when roaming.

8. A recommendation will be made to CRASA (SADC) that a regional clearing house should be established to ensure lower costs for roaming in the region. The utilisation of existing direct links between member states should be addressed at policy level to ensure further reduction of cost and avoid routing of regional traffic via international carriers/agents.

“The National Regulators Authorities (NRAs) in the four Member States will continually communicate with operators to ensure regulatory stability. NRAs will also enforce the implementation of this pilot project because; it is in line with the decision of the SADC ICT Ministers and it is for the benefit of the SADC Region.” Vosloo concluded.

“Ends”

Issued by: Katrina Siken

Head: Communications and External Relations

Tel: +264 61 222 666

ksiken@cran.na

Responsibilities of the Authority:

- *Ensure compliance with legislation and regulations*
- *Grant, renew, amend, transfer, suspend and revoke licenses*
- *Implement a transparent and fair pricing regime*
- *Respond to consumer complaints*
- *Protect consumers in respect of prices, quality, variety of services and user equipment supplied*
- *Promote competition amongst service providers*
- *Manage spectrum planning and allocation*
- *Ensure telecommunications services are operated in a manner best suited to the economic and social development of Namibia*
- *Establish procedures for ensuring safety and quality of services*
- *Regulate interconnection*
- *Facilitate the negotiation of rights of way*
- *Manage numbering planning and allocation*
- *Facilitate universal service, and Attract foreign direct investment*