

OPENING STATEMENT BY

**HON. JOEL KAAPANDA, MP, MINISTER OF
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION
TECHNOLOGY**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE ADVANCED
SPECTRUM MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP**

WINDHOEK

2 FEBRUARY 2015

Mr. Anthony Chigaazira, Executive Secretary at CRASA,

Ms. Bridget Linzie, Head of Electronic Communications at CRASA

Mr. Wladimir Bocquet, Head of Policy Planning at GSMA

Mr. Niall Magennis, Content Manager of the Groupe Speciale Mobile Association at GSMA

Ms. Hilma Hitula, Acting Chief Executive Officer of CRAN, and the rest of CRAN's management and staff

Participants from regulators across Africa,

Participants from operators in Namibia,

Members of the media,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I welcome you, our distinguished guests and participants to the Advanced Spectrum Management Workshop jointly organised by CRASA, and the GSMA and hosted by CRAN.

I am pleased that many of the Namibian operators are present here today and are utilising this opportunity to further garner information on the effective use of spectrum management, in order to benefit ICT consumers in Namibia and the SADC region.

Radio Frequency Spectrum is a limited national resource that is critical in providing backbone distribution and last mile solutions for

commercial, civil, public, community, security and personal communication services. This includes the use of spectrum for a number of applications such as narrow and broadband, mobile telecommunications, broadcasting, aeronautical and marine communication as well as various types of scientific applications such as radio astronomy and environmental aspects.

We are all aware that spectrum is non-exhaustible and non-storable. It does not run out, but it may become congested resulting in its uneconomic use. Spectrum therefore, requires prudent management to ensure equitable access and efficient utilisation to meet future needs of all aforesaid stakeholders. The effective and optimal management of spectrum can only take place within a conducive regulatory framework where legislation, regulations, strategy and procedures are prevalent.

Over the last decade, the management of spectrum has become one of the most regulated national resources. This regulation was necessitated by the evolution of telecommunication technologies, which increased congestion in some frequency bands. The demand that technology is placing on spectrum has spurred the ITU and the member states to devise strategies and plans to not only preserve, but to ensure maximum utilization of allocated spectrum.

Namibia's policy makers, myself included, have appreciated the importance of protecting this finite natural resource for the current and future benefit of Namibian ICT consumers. At the same time, my Ministry understands that it will have to facilitate innovative and efficient use of spectrum to achieve Namibia's Vision 2030 goals of increased access to ICT infrastructure, greater competition, and diverse telecommunication service offerings.

The Ministry and CRAN will continuously modernise spectrum planning, allocation and monitoring activities. We will continue to support CRASA in its efforts to harmonise the applicable standards with other SADC member states and regulators as well as to ensure the adherence to international standards and best practices.

With the support of my Ministry, CRAN is in the process of developing a spectrum assignment strategy to ensure service delivery and competition in the market. The strategy will outline how Namibia will optimally achieve the efficient assignment of spectrum.

The objective of the spectrum assignment strategy has been tailored to consist of the following:

- To promote the use of spectrum as a tool to develop telecommunications services and to access ICT infrastructure as a basis for social and economic development;
- To facilitate a wide array of services on different technological platforms;
- To promote competition through minimising constraints on spectrum use within a service and technology neutral licensing regime.
- To promote the effective and efficient use of spectrum within the digital dividend, in order to address gaps in telecommunication services and access to ICT infrastructure;
- To set conditions for spectrum use to ensure effective use of a scarce resource and to prevent anti-competitive practices;
- To promote and if necessary enforce the freeing up of spectrum space for the allocation of emerging technologies and services by phasing out ageing technologies; and lastly,
- To set commensurate fees for spectrum use.

Ladies and Gentlemen, technology and service evolution enables the utilisation of higher and lower frequency bands. This will produce new service opportunities as well as the migration of telecommunication services to new bands. This in turn means that, over time, national frequency plans will need to be reviewed frequently in order for any frequency allocation process to be a step ahead of the markets demands.

The migration from analogue to digital televisions services, which will free up the digital dividend for International Mobile Technology (IMT) services, has commenced and Namibia is working tirelessly to meet the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) June 2015 deadline. CRAN will rationalise and oversee the migration of services to ensure the continuity of broadcasting and telecommunication services in Namibia and the provision of new digital services.

Effective spectrum management, which limits the interference that undermines telecommunication services to be effectively provided, requires Namibia to harmonise its spectrum plans with international statutes and to cooperate with other SADC member states. Harmonisation in the use of radio spectrum is crucial to ensure amongst others, interoperability between systems and networks, facilitation of frequency coordination between countries and the establishment of international systems. I have confidence that the able bodied CRASA will continue to actively pursue international harmonisation and opportunities for regional cooperation in the ICT sector.

Ladies and gentleman, allow me to sincerely thank CRASA and the GSMA for their continued support not only to Namibia but also to SADC and to Africa. I must also sincerely thank CRAN for hosting this workshop and for their passion to transform Namibia and its people into

an active based knowledge society.

I welcome each and every one of you to Namibia and wish you a pleasant stay in the land of the brave.

It is now my distinct pleasure to declare this workshop open.

I thank you.