

CRAN HOSTS ICT STAKEHOLDERS TO DISCUSS THE DIGITISATION AGENDA IN THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR AND COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR BROADCASTERS

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The Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN) hosted its Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Stakeholder Round Table Panel Discussion. The round table dialogued the regulatory elements required to achieve a digital economy in Namibia and attain 100% broadband coverage as set out in the Harambee Prosperity Plan II.

Speaking at the event yesterday, Heinrich Mihe Gaomab II, Chairperson of the Board of Directors of CRAN, said “digital technologies have become a critical enabler of connectivity facilitating continuity of our regular lives and connecting people. However, through the disruptive experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world has learnt first-hand just how essential digital technologies are for the functioning of our economies, societies and individual lives. The pandemic has also laid bare the blunt realities of the digital divide, especially within developing economies, such as Namibia. Hence, the importance of affordable and reliable digital infrastructure to all parts of the country.”

He added that regulation enables setting the scene to connecting the majority of the population that is still offline, and serves as an equalizer, so all market players' benefit from a level playing field. Regulation can also foster an environment that encourages and sustains technological innovation and universal access to affordable ICT services and products. The Authority is therefore required to enable a digital framework that facilitates the provision of broadband services, introduction of new leading services such as 5G, and ensure access to broadband services for all Namibians.

Telecommunications operators are required to embrace the key cultural and strategic characteristics of Digital Economy businesses in order to better reflect their market and meet the policy directives of the digitization agenda, within the framework enabled by the Authority. This inter-relation creates an ICT ecosystem, which offers great opportunities for the ICT community in Namibia to come together and dialogue on how to accelerate digital transformation on an unprecedented scale.

“This platform was created to bring together all players in the ecosystem to dialogue the elements of digitisation. The platform shall enable CRAN to strengthen stakeholder

relationships with all Licensees to collectively shape, facilitate, position and steer our industry in the right direction and in the right manner, for a high performing and accelerating sector for the benefit of all Namibians,” added Gaomab II.

Additionally, CRAN held a separate stakeholder engagement event for Broadcasting Service Licensees to address issues such as compliance requirements, sustainability and viability of Broadcasting Services in the country. Broadcasting Service Licensees are authorised to provide broadcasting services, and to install, maintain and operate necessary infrastructure.

To date, CRAN issued 20 Commercial Broadcasting Service Licences, 15 Community Broadcasting Service Licences and one Signal Distributor Licence.

Speaking at the event, Emilia Nghikembua, Chief Executive Officer CRAN said “a harmonious relation is pertinent for the ICT sector as Licensees operate in an extremely unique sphere, as it is one of the ever-evolving, high-paced and robust sectors in any economy. Therefore, we at CRAN shall continuously and proactively engage various ICT stakeholders in order to meet and exceed ICT consumer needs and expectations by delivering, affordable, quality and recent and emerging technological offerings to our Namibian ICT consumers”.

“Ends”

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