

PROGRESS ON SIM CARD REGISTRATION FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN) launched the National SIM Registration Consumer Awareness Campaign in June 2022 in anticipation of the mandatory SIM card registration which became mandatory in Namibia in January 2023 in line with the provisions of Section 77 of the Communications Act (No. 8 of 2009) and ancillary regulations. Telecommunications service providers have until 31 December 2023 to conclude the registration of all existing customers. Unregistered SIM cards will be deactivated after 31 December 2023.

“CRAN herewith provides progress on the SIM card registration by mobile operators. As of 15 June 2023, there were 2,760,804 active SIM cards across all licensed networks in Namibia, of which 795,991 SIM cards were registered. This signifies a 29% registration rate”, states Katrina Siken, Executive Communication and Consumer Relations, CRAN.

“Some challenges experienced by mobile operators during SIM card registration process entail resistance from local authorities in allowing for the setup of registration points, power failures in remote areas that interrupt the automated registration process, slow or lax uptake of SIM card registration by customers, inaccurate information submitted by customers, and customers who do not have national identification documents or a proof of residence,” adds Siken. The industry SIM registration monitoring committee will consider these challenges by engaging relevant stakeholders to ensure a seamless registration process.

In May 2023, CRAN issued a directive to all concerned operators that the mandatory capturing of biometric data will no longer be required for the purpose of SIM card registration. Operators will only require the information as set out in the regulations, which includes, the name of the customer, his/her address of ordinary residence, and his/her

Namibian ID, passport or any other official identity document issued by the government of any other country. Customers who, however, voluntarily choose to provide their biometrics data are welcome to do so.

“The Authority conducted a compliance monitoring exercise, which has concluded that all licensed operators have complied with the directive as issued by CRAN. There is no mandatory registration of biometric data, during the SIM registration process,” clarified Sikeneni.

SIM Card Registration is a national initiative aimed at facilitating the investigation of crimes committed with the aid of mobile devices. There are also benefits and use cases that are directly facilitated by the registration of digital identities. Moreover, there has been an increase in the use of digital and/or online services, providing opportunities for Namibians to embrace virtual teaching and learning, mobile banking, online shopping, just to mention a few. Therefore, it is important that national safety and security agencies are capacitated to ensure a safe digital environment.

CRAN thus urges members of the public to actively participate in the SIM registration process to ensure that their SIM cards are not deactivated. We wish to reiterate that all unregistered SIM cards by 31 December 2023 will be deactivated, and these consumers will not be able to utilise telecommunications services.

“ENDS”

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