

CRAN CANCELS SPECTRUM LICENCES FOR UCOM MOBILE NAMIBIA (PTY) LTD

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The Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN) herewith informs stakeholders and consumers that it has cancelled the Spectrum Licences awarded to UCOM Mobile Namibia (Pty) Ltd (formerly known as Mobile Telephone Networks Business Solutions Namibia (Pty) Ltd (MTN)), issued between November 2014 and April 2020.

Reasons for cancellation

Non-payment of spectrum fees:

UCOM Mobile Namibia (Pty) Ltd failed to pay fees for the awarded spectrum licenses and to honour all payment arrangements entered into with the Authority. In total, the licensee owes the Authority N\$19,280,754.67 due to cumulative invoices. Following unsuccessful mediation processes, the High Court granted default judgement against UCOM Mobile Namibia (Pty) Ltd on 16 November 2023.

Inefficient utilisation of spectrum:

Furthermore, UCOM Mobile Namibia (Pty) Ltd failed to efficiently utilise the awarded spectrum resulting in spectrum hoarding.

Impact of decision

Ms. Emilia Nghikembua clarified that *“The nonpayment of spectrum fees and hoarding of spectrum constitute a material breach of the license conditions and are classified as grounds for license cancellation. Notably, CRAN held extensive consultations with the UCOM Mobile Namibia (Pty) Ltd to find a lasting solution to the compliance matters, over a period time, but such engagements did not yield any corrective outcomes.”*

In consideration of the impact of this decision on consumers and UCOM Mobile Namibia (Pty) Ltd, CRAN has granted UCOM Mobile Namibia (Pty) Ltd a period of six (6) months until June 2024, to facilitate the migration of their (approximately 1,000) customers and to conduct an orderly wind-up of their operations. After this stipulated period, all services will be terminated.

“The Authority remains committed to ensure a viable telecommunications market that generates consumer benefits, through the promotion of competition. This

commitment will, amongst others, be executed through ensuring regulatory compliance to license conditions and operating parameters, which is the backbone of consumer protection,” concluded Mrs. Nghikembua.

“ENDS”

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