



# CRAN

Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia

**BRIEFING REMARKS BY**

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**SIM CARD REGISTRATION PROGRESS UPDATE**

**DATE:** WEDNESDAY, 13 MARCH 2024

**VENUE:** GOVERNMENT INFORMATION CENTRE (GIC)

**TIME:** 10H00

- Esteemed Stakeholders,
- Members of the Media,
- Director of Ceremonies,

Good morning!

The Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN) herewith appreciate this opportunity to provide a briefing on the status on the registration of Mandatory Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) cards in Namibia. The Regulations setting out the registration requirements were issued by the Minister of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), in terms of Part 6 of Chapter V of the Communications Act (No. 8 of 2009), on 15 March 2021 and introduced mandatory registration of SIM cards in Namibia. Mandatory SIM Card Registration is a policy adopted as part of efforts to mitigate security concerns, address crime, and enable the application of digital services.

The initial period for registration commenced on 01 January 2023 for a period of 12 months, lapsing on 31 December 2023. The then Minister of Information and Communication Technology, Dr. Peya Mushelenga, announced a three-month extension to the mandatory SIM card registration deadline, effective from 01 January to 31 March 2024. This decision followed stakeholder consultations, which aim to ensure full compliance with regulatory requirements, and to afford all consumers an opportunity to register their SIM cards. We therefore wish to use this opportunity to remind all stakeholders and consumers that the deadline for mandatory SIM card registration remains 31 March 2024.

As of 29 February 2024, Namibia has a total of 2,387,230 active SIM cards in the country. Out of these, **1,687,742** SIM cards have been successfully registered, representing an overall registration rate of **70.6%**.

I am pleased to report that Paratus Telecommunications and UCOM Mobile Namibia (Pty) Ltd have achieved a remarkable milestone with 100% SIM card registration, demonstrating their commitment to regulatory compliance and customer service.

I am further joyful to report positive progress in SIM card registrations, particularly with Mobile Telecommunications (MTC), which has seen an increase from 70% to 76% in registrations, indicating steady growth, primarily driven by active measures on the ground to ensure that all SIM cards are registered. This is a significant milestone considering that most active SIM cards are on the MTC network.

Conversely, Telecom Namibia (TN) has witnessed a decrease in registrations, falling to 54% (as of 29 February 2024) from the 79% reported on 26 January 2024. This decline stems from a notable adjustment in their registered subscriber count, prompted by the removal of deactivated registered numbers. The error from Telecom Namibia has had a ripple effect on the national average, which remained unchanged from 70.97% in January to the present. This stagnation can be attributed to the overstatement of TN numbers in January, which has since been rectified.

It is imperative to emphasise that the deadline for Mandatory SIM Card registration in Namibia is swiftly approaching on 31 March 2024. CRAN reaffirms its commitment to closely collaborate with all operators to ensure strict adherence to regulatory requirements, while also urging continuous efforts to boost registration rates on the part of operators.

Unregistered SIM cards will face suspension for a period of three (3) months on 01 April 2024. During this suspension period, customers attempting to utilise the service will encounter service unavailability and will receive a warning message accordingly. If the number remains unregistered during these three

(3) months, it will be forfeited. The Authority is satisfied that operators have active mechanisms in place to effectively implement the suspension from 01 April 2024.

We pause here to stress that suspension of SIM cards, while inevitable, is an unintended consequence of the process, which can be actively averted by registration. With the advancement of technology, ecommerce has become a new way of doing business and the SIM card gives consumers a digital identity in this regard. Hence it is imperative that consumer safeguard their digital identity through registration, so that they can continue to enjoy the benefits of ecommerce.

The Authority therefore, urges all consumers to complete their SIM card registrations prior to 31 March 2024, to maintain access to a broad spectrum of high-quality, dependable, and efficient telecommunications services provided by our licensed operators.

Thank you for your attention.