

CLARIFICATION ON SIM REGISTRATION COMMENCEMENT DATES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Government of the Republic of Namibia issued a policy directive, as published in the *Government Gazette* of 15 March 2021, that all Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) cards in Namibia must be registered in line with the provisions of Section 77 of the Communications Act (No. 8 of 2009). Mandatory SIM Card Registration is a policy adopted by several governments around the world as part of efforts to mitigate security concerns, address crime and enable the application of digital services.

However, the Authority has noted some confusion amongst members of the public on the commencement date of mandatory SIM Card Registration. *"We wish to clarify that the commencement date for mandatory SIM Card Registration is 1 January 2023 and the last day will be 31 December 2023. The final date for registration is therefore not 31 December 2022. To this end, consumers still have 12 months to ensure registration with their mobile service providers. Unregistered SIM cards will be deactivated after 31 December 2023,"* said Mrs. Emilia Nghikembua, Chief Executive Officer, CRAN.

CRAN is satisfied with the progress of the awareness campaign and the positive response from members of the public. The operators have equally expressed their satisfaction with the turnout of members of the public to register their SIM cards. *"At this stage, we envisage that the registration of all SIM cards will be completed well within the mandatory timelines i.e., 31 December 2023,"* stated Mrs. Nghikembua.

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.

"Namibia currently has seven (7) active mobile service providers, and customers can register their SIM cards at the service provider(s) they subscribe to, by providing their full name, proof of residential address, and identity number in the form of a copy of an Identity Document (ID) or passport. The SIM Registration Conditions apply to Namibian nationals and foreigners and extend to include new or existing customers," added Mrs. Nghikembua.

Furthermore, CRAN conducted SIM Registration Awareness Activation Campaigns in all major town across the country, and held interviews and panel discussions, engaging with the public and informing them of the benefits of SIM Card Registration. CRAN has also formed a SIM Registration Committee, in collaboration mobile operators to observe the preparedness before the mandatory registration comes into effect, and challenges they might be experiencing during the registration process.

"CRAN thus urge all consumers to register their SIM cards, in order to enjoy the availability of a wide range of high quality, reliable and efficient telecommunications services as provided by our licensees," concluded Mrs. Nghikembua.

"ENDS"

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