



**OPENING REMARKS BY**

**EMILIA NGHIKEMBUA,  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**AT THE COMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF NAMIBIA'S  
(CRAN) IMT-2020 5G STRATEGY FOR NAMIBIA FOR THE PERIOD 2022 -  
2027**

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING**

**Date:** Friday, 05 August 2022

**Venue:** Arebbusch Travel Lodge

**Time:** 09h00

- Director of Ceremonies,
- Esteemed ICT Stakeholders,
- CRAN Executive Management and team,
- Members of the Media,

Good morning and a very warm welcome, to this important public consultative meeting on the IMT-2020 (commonly known as 5G) Strategy for Namibia for the period 2022 to 2027. The Authority was directed by Cabinet to develop this Strategy, prior to implementation of 5G in the Republic of Namibia and to conduct public consultation in this regard. The strategy was developed, through the concerted efforts of a steering committee made up of CRAN, the National Radiation Protection Authority, the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism and the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology. The strategy is a precursor for the imminent award of radio frequency spectrum for 5G and will thus set the tone by creating an enabling regulatory framework and environment to support the deployment of 5G in Namibia.

5G is the fifth generation of wireless communication technologies, which follows 2G, 3G and 4G (IMT-2000) mobile technologies. The introduction of 5G is aimed at increasing the number of innovative solutions to provide for higher traffic volumes, connection of more devices with diverse service requirements, provision of person-to-person, person-to-machine and machine-to-machine

communication, reduction of costs, affordability, and improved quality of user experience.

**Director of Ceremonies,**

Our position is that IMT-2020 will support Namibia's ability to benefit from the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution (4IR). This is especially because the rollout of all the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution technologies (such as big data, IOT and AI) requires 5G to improve operational effectiveness, improve workplace and worker safety, and to create an enabling faster and effective inspections through predictive intelligence.

As is evident from the draft strategy, our policy and regulatory framework is ready for the deployment of 5G. The only change required is for spectrum bands allocated for 5G at the ITU WRC-19 to be incorporated in Namibia's Frequency Band plan. Upon finalisation of the review of the Band Plan, new Spectrum Licenses will be issued for the provision of 5G services in Namibia. We anticipate that this spectrum will be released in the first quarter of 2023.

**Director of Ceremonies,**

As is the case with the introduction of new technologies, the decision to deploy 5G must be dependent on consumer needs and the appetite of our licensees to meet those needs. Let me also clarify that

5G is a customer centric technology, focussed on serving specific customer needs at specific locations, whilst 4G provides for rollout over larger geographic areas. At present, 4G services are provided to 79% of the population and thus it is important to ensure continued rollout of 4G networks.

Nine out of 14 regions have 4G population coverage of below 80%. Kunene, Kavango West and Omaheke have less than 50% 4G population coverage. Therefore, Namibia needs to strike a balance between providing 4G connectivity to larger segments of the population and providing 5G connectivity which entails higher data speed in specific locations to support industrial applications requiring very high data throughput.

Our position is that we must promote technological innovation, through the deployment of advanced facilities and networks such as 5G, to effectively respond to the diver needs of commerce and industry. We must, however, be cautious that 5G is a niche technology and targeted primarily at, and is most effective in, densely populated areas. Because 5G depends on very densely deployed small cells, it is highly unlikely to replace 4G for coverage outside towns and thus will not be a solution for the digital divide that affects those areas.

**Director of Ceremonies,**

The COVID-19 pandemic began to spread at the beginning of 2020, which was coincidentally the same time when 5G mobile networks were being developed across the globe, following the conclusion of the ITU World Radio Conference in 2019. Consequently, information was circulated, predominantly on social media, suggesting that the roll out of 5G networks was accelerating or directly causing the spread of COVID-19. In Namibia too, conspiracy theories linking 5G with Covid-19 went viral during lockdown.

**To this end, we wish to inform the Namibian public that there is no evidence to support the conspiracy theory that the COVID-19 pandemic is caused by electromagnetic radiation from 5G.**

Parenthetically, we would like to clarify that COVID-19 is caused by a virus strain called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and is transmitted primarily through the respiratory tract when an infected person coughs, sneezes, sings, talks, or breathes and spread the virus into the air. Radiation from 5G towers does not mix with air to become poisonous or prevent people from being able to breathe. It is therefore not possible for 5G mobile technology to spread this virus.

A key focus area in terms of CRAN's Strategic Plan is consumer advocacy and stakeholder engagement. This focus area has defined the way stakeholder engagement is managed, with the emphasis being on proactive, appropriate, and robust dissemination of information and consumer education. As part of this initiative, CRAN

will thus ensure that ICT consumers are informed and engaged through various public awareness campaigns on the benefits of 5G and demystify these conspiracy theories.

As an independent and responsible regulator, CRAN will always ensure public health and safety of all consumers of ICT products and services. We thus urge consumers and members of the public to embrace the vast array of new applications as they offer numerous benefits to the agriculture, health, education, and financial sectors.

### **Director of Ceremonies,**

This public consultative meeting provides an opportunity for stakeholders to give input that would guide the final strategy to be submitted to the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for the consideration by Cabinet.

Stakeholders were also afforded an opportunity to provide public comments to the IMT-2020 5G Strategy for Namibia for the period 2022 to 2027, which closed on 31 July 2022. We will provide written feedback to those stakeholders, to indicate how those comments were considered.

Allow me to welcome everyone again and may our conversation today bear fruit towards fostering long and lasting and positive relations for the benefit of our industry and all ICT consumers.

**I thank you!**