



OPENING REMARKS BY

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**AT THE COMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY
OF NAMIBIA'S (CRAN) PUBLIC CONSULTATIVE MEETING
PERTAINING TO UNIVERSAL SERVICE LEVY**

Date: Monday, 08 August 2022

Venue: Safari Hotel and Conference Centre

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 pertaining to Regulations prescribing the Universal Service Levy.

As you may all recall, the Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN) held several consultative meetings to share with stakeholders the proposed levy and roll out plans, and to provide a platform whereby stakeholders could voice their opinions and formally submit their comments on these envisaged regulations.

Additionally, the Universal Service Levy groundwork commenced in December 2013 when CRAN collected network information of each telecommunication licensee. A further step was taken in October 2014 to operationalise Part IV of the Communications Act (No. 8 of 2009). CRAN has therefore, been aggressively conducting benchmarking exercises, capacity building training, and drafting these regulations.

Director of Ceremonies,

Section 56(2) of the Act gives CRAN the authority to impose a Universal Service Levy on Telecommunications Service Licensees, which will be paid into the Universal Service Fund. The monies in the fund will be utilised for paying subsidies to telecommunications licensees to enable them to provide services or infrastructure for the provision of universal service and access to Information and Communications Technology (ICT) services in Namibia.

Additionally, the Universal Service Levy Regulations aim to prescribe the scope of universal service and persons eligible to receive subsidies under the fund and prescribe the minimum telecommunications services to be made available by telecommunications licensees and other ancillary matters.

Director of Ceremonies,

Furthermore, CRAN conducted a Universal Access and Service study as envisaged by the National Broadband Policy for the Republic of Namibia for the period 2019 to 2029. The goal of the National Broadband Policy is to achieve reliable and affordable broadband access infrastructure services for all, based on guiding principles such as to ensure universal access to broadband infrastructure and services, to promote the development of content, applications and innovation, to support efforts aimed at capacity building, create awareness and reducing the digital divide, and to provide an enabling environment for broadband deployment.

By implementing these Regulations, communities will be empowered to make use of telecommunication services and take advantage of the numerous opportunities and benefits on offer.

The Authority revealed the methods of imposing Universal Service Obligations which includes the modification of licenses, renewal, tendering and submission of bids, subsidies from the Universal Service Fund and by new applications of Universal Service Licenses.

Telecommunications Service Licensees shall be required to avail the minimum universal services to the general public or to school, higher education institutions, libraries, hospital, clinics, health facilities, or any similar public institutions, which serve the needs of the general public or that are available for use by the public.

Director of Ceremonies,

In conclusion, CRAN's aspiration is to help create an environment of availability, accessibility and affordability for universal service and other ICT services for all Namibians, and to help bridge the nation's digital divide.

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

I thank you!