OPENING REMARKS BY

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AT THE COMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF NAMIBIA'S (CRAN) SPECTRUM ASSIGNMENT STRATEGY 2022 - 2024 PUBLIC HEARING

Date: Tuesday, 12 April 2022

Venue: Arebbusch Travel Lodge

Time: 09h00

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

Good morning and a very warm welcome! Thank you for accepting our invitation to this important public consultative meeting pertaining to Spectrum Assignment Strategy of the Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN) for the period 2022 to 2024.

As per Section 99 of the Communications Act (No. 8 of 2009) the Authority is vested with the control, planning, administration, management and licensing of the radio frequency spectrum. The Authority deems it prudent to keep abreast of the latest regulatory trends and technology developments to ensure the efficient use of spectrum as a limited resource, taking into account that spectrum forms the basis for development of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector.

Therefore, the Authority has developed a spectrum assignment strategy setting out objectives for spectrum management and providing clarity in respect of the Authority's approach to the control, planning, administration and licensing of radio frequency spectrum.

Director of Ceremonies,

Radio frequency spectrum is a limited, finite national resource that is critical in providing backbone, distribution, and last mile solutions for commercial, civil, public, community, security, and personal communication services. It therefore requires prudent management to ensure equitable access and efficient utilisation to meet the communication needs of all stakeholders. Spectrum management takes place within a regulatory framework comprised of policies, legislation, regulations and procedures.

Moreover, the Authority will fulfil its role in spectrum management in order to facilitate the availability of spectrum to be used as a tool to develop communications services and access to ICT infrastructure, as a basis for social and economic development to benefit from the digital transformation and opportunities presented by the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR).

Additionally, spectrum management aims to promote competition through minimisation of constraints on spectrum use within a service and technology neutral license regime allowing similar services to be offered on different technology platforms. It also promotes the effective and efficient use of spectrum within the digital divide, and to address gaps in communications services and access to ICT networks and utilisation of these services.

Furthermore, spectrum management sets conditions for spectrum use to ensure efficient use of scarce resources and prevent anti-competitive practices such as hoarding of spectrum, and to free up spectrum space for assignment to emerging technologies and service by phasing out ageing technologies, just to mention a few.

Director of Ceremonies,

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) divided the world into three regions with Africa forming part of Region 1 together with mainly Western Europe and the Russian Federation. The Authority will allocate radio spectrum in line with regulations and guidelines issued by the ITU for Region 1 and the Frequency Band Plan for Namibia as published in the Government *Gazette* from time to time. The Frequency Band Plan for Namibia sets out what radio services can use which frequencies, as well as the pre-conditions of use as applicable.

Moreover, the Authority will review the frequency band plan, at least every four (4) years based on the outcomes of the ITU World Radio Conference (WRC) and subsequent ITU regulations, and amend frequency band allocations and regulations as required, following due regulatory process. Where spectrum licensees are required to migrate to new frequencies, as a result of a new Frequency Band Plan coming into effect, the Authority will address each migration on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the Regulations Setting out Spectrum Licensing Procedures.

Director of Ceremonies,

With regard to spectrum availability for emerging technologies, the characteristics of different spectrum bands determine what services can be deployed in which spectrum band and whether spectrum bands can be utilised for rural, urban or for both rural and urban network and service deployment. Applications and use cases also have different spectrum requirements. Furthermore, the Authority intend to make spectrum available for Internet-of-Things (IoT), WiFi-6E, WiGiG, IMT and HAPS. This approach will strike a balance in supporting the rollout of networks and services to support digital transformation, industrialisation in line with 4IR objectives whilst providing for expansion of services in rural areas.

Regarding spectrum availability for broadcasting services, the Authority developed a regulatory framework for implementation of digital sound broadcasting in 2020 in accordance with the technical standards and regulatory framework guidelines approved by the SADC ICT Ministers in September 2017.

Spectrum was made available on a first-come, first-serve basis for implementation of Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) technology in the VHF III band from 214-230 MHz in accordance with the ITU GE06 agreement signed by Namibia in 2007, and Digital Audio Mondiale

(DRM) technology in the 148.5-200 kHz and 535.5-1606.5 kHz spectrum bands.

Given the topography of Namibia, satellite plays an important role in providing services to remote rural areas and is utilised as backhaul transmission by broadcasters and telecommunications service licensees, as well as providing electronic communications services to mines, lodges, etc.

Delivery of telecommunications and/or broadcasting services via satellite technologies requires a services licence in terms of Section 37 and 83 of the Communications Act (No. 8 of 2009), as may be applicable. Spectrum licences for delivery of satellite services are awarded in conjunction with service.

Given that satellite services share spectrum bands with other terrestrial services, the aforementioned approach provides the Authority with the necessary control over spectrum resources to mitigate interference and to provide for orderly spectrum management. All satellite equipment are subject to type approval prior to importation into Namibia.

Overall, harmonisation in the use of radio spectrum is crucial to ensure amongst others, interoperability between systems and networks,

facilitating frequency coordination between countries and establishing international systems.

Director of Ceremonies,

In conclusion, Ms. Ronel Le Grange, Head: Electronic Communications will be presenting the spectrum assignment strategy for the period 2022 to 2024, which will be implemented through the review of the Authority's current spectrum management regulatory framework during the course of next three years.

Stakeholders were invited to provide public comments to the Spectrum Assignment Strategy 2022 to 2022, which closed on 04 April 2022. To this end, the Authority will undertake a review of the Spectrum fee regulations, Frequency channeling plan for FM analogue broadcasting, and Licence Exempt Spectrum.

In the next step, the Authority will consider the review of the Frequency Band Plan of Namibia after conclusion of the next ITU WRC-23 to be held in November to December in 2023. Such a review will be based on the Final Acts of WRC-23.

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!