



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MEDIA BRIEFING

IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION OF ICT INFRASTRUCTURE

BY

**HONOURABLE STANLEY M. SIMATAA, MINISTER OF
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

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Hon. Deputy Minister

Mr. Mbeuta ua Ndjarakana, Permanent Secretary of the MICT,

Members of the Ministry's management team,

Members of the Media

1. Good morning and thank you for having honoured the invitation to our engagement this morning. I have called this media briefing to address various misrepresentations that have been made on this matter, in particular to put in perspective the 081 everyone project launched last year under the auspices of MTC. You will recall that this project has been christened as 100 percent network coverage. By the way, 100 percent network coverage should not be construed as coverage in terms of geographical size of our country, but rather in terms of population save for the imperative for coverage along our highways to cater for emergencies as and when they occur.

2. I should however stated that the provision and concomitant improvement and expansion of ICT infrastructure, is a national development imperative which has been executed and will continue to be executed under the leadership of past, present and future Ministers who had, have and will have the privilege of leading the ICT sector. This therefore implies that the project is not executed at the mercy nor at the whims or caprices of the incumbent Minister! Like I said earlier, it is a national development imperative any Minister appointed to this portfolio should and must honor.

3. It suffices therefore to locate this project within the basket of national priorities as articulated in key national documents, notably Vision 2030, the fifth National Development Plan (NDP5) and the Harambee Prosperity Plan. Equally, what the Ministry has set itself to achieve in terms of its Strategic Plan complimented by the Minister and Deputy Minister's Performance Agreements, should be factored in the sectoral delivery equation.

4. Vision 2030 foresees our country in future developing into an industrialized and knowledge based economy. In pursuit of this long term goal, the NDP5 locates ICT as an one of enabling pillars of such development while the HPP under the pillar IMPROVE PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY, affirms the need to expand access to broadband, subsequently internet access. In view of the fore-mentioned, one cannot fathom Vision 2030 being pursued, NDP5 being met, HPP being realized, key Ministerial strategic objectives being honoured and finally the ICT Minister and Deputy Minister's performance being favorably rated, without the commensurate investment in the improvement and expansion of existing ICT infrastructure.

5. Today, we all marvel at the developmental progress our sister country in Africa, namely Rwanda has achieved - all thanks to the consistent and sustained investments they have made and continues to make in the ICT sector. On his part, HE Dr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, has often emphasized the need for inclusive growth and prosperity. Realizing inclusive and sustainable growth and prosperity in our country, is contingent on there being equity in the provision of quality and affordable ICT infrastructure. You will certainly agree with me that our country cannot achieve inclusive development when we continue to have islands of prosperity in urban areas surrounded by a sea of rural poverty.

6. Contrary to what has been said in various newspaper reports on MTC's network improvement and expansion (081 EVERY ONE) project over the past weeks, MTC, as I asserted last year when launching the project, will execute the project in phases over a period of three years, within available financial means and without eroding its profitability. Like any other business, MTC should not be denied the business latitude at its disposal to invest part of its earnings to expand its business. I must state that during this time, MTC's ability to run its business profitably and declare dividends, will not be impaired. Realizing the 081 EVERY ONE Project will amongst other things yield the following benefits:

- a) Will add an estimated 115 000 customers (citizens) to its client base, the majority of whom are citizens in rural Namibia ;**
- b) Will result in an enhanced network thus improving overall customer experience ;**
- c) Will boost investment opportunities in rural areas thereby achieving the much needed development of rural Namibia. This has the potential benefit of minimising rural to urban migration;**
- d) Will enable government to realise the much talked about e-government services, including the realization of e-learning and e-health services;**
- e) Based on global statistical evidence, it has been proven that a 10% increase in mobile network coverage will result in a one percent growth in GDP,;**
- f) Our nation's preparedness during times of emergencies will be improved given the enhanced network connectivity; and most importantly**
- g) Employment opportunities will be created for the duration of the project thereby breathing life in the depressed economy.**

I therefore hope and trust that this matter will now be put to bed!