



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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NOTICE OF QUESTION

Hon. Maximaliant T. Katjimune asked me the following questions:

1. Is it not logical and prudent that the Ministry considers extending the deadline for the registration of SIM cards beyond 31 December 2023?
2. Has the Ministry investigated the hesitation of citizens who are grappling to adhere to registration requisites? If so, how has the Ministry attempted to assure citizens of the process?
3. What collaborative efforts has the Ministry engaged in with mobile service providers, such as MTC to activate a constituency-by-constituency registration approach in an attempt to avoid cumbersome travels and prolonged waiting periods for citizens, especially in rural areas?

I will deal with them all at once.

First, the Communication Regulatory Authority of Namibia, through various engagements with operators, has documented the different challenges encountered during the registration process, including resistance from local authorities to assist Mobile Service Providers in setting up registration points, power interruptions in remote areas, hesitancy among certain segments of the public, and inaccuracies in the information provided during registration. To confront these challenges, CRAN has actively commenced engagement and collaborations with Regional Councils, Local Authorities, and Regional Governors. These crucial stakeholders will participate in discussions to identify solutions and facilitate a smoother registration process. Their involvement is deemed essential in overcoming the hurdles encountered during registration efforts. The engagement will also involve disseminating public information to create awareness of the importance of registration.

Second, CRAN is actively collaborating with Regional Councils and Local Authorities to support Mobile Service Providers in implementing the registration process. This collaborative endeavour is intended to alleviate the challenges Mobile Service Providers face during the implementation of such an approach. The ultimate goal is to ensure that citizens, particularly those in rural areas, have convenient access to registration points within their respective constituencies, thereby reducing the inconvenience associated with extensive travel and prolonged waiting periods during the registration process. The progress of these collaborative efforts will be discussed further at the SIM Registration Committee.

Third, based on what I have outlined above, the Ministry is monitoring the ongoing registration process. We will review the measures being implemented by the Regulator before we announce the next steps. In the meantime, we encourage all SIM Card holders to register their cards in the next three months to avoid deactivating their cards.

//END.

No 166

26/09/2023

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

NOTICE OF QUESTION

BY

Hon. Maximalliant T. Katjimune (PDM)

Signature: 

08 October 2023

I hereby give notice that on Thursday, ~~28 September 2023~~, I shall ask the Minister of Information, Communication and Technology, Hon. Peya Mushelenga, the following:

Honourable Minister,

Access to information is an inherent right, and this was further entrenched by this August House when we passed the Access to Information Act, 2022 (Act. No. 8 of 2022)¹. One of the inherent pillars which facilitates access to information is connectivity through telecommunications devices, and sim cards are the means through which the mass citizenry communicates and has access to information.

We have taken note that the Ministry, through a statement released on 21 September 2023, has stated that the ongoing SIM card registration deadline will not be extended beyond 31 December 2023, which means that hundreds of thousands of Namibians who have still not registered their SIM cards will be left out of the grid and without connectivity.

It is incomprehensible that the Ministry plans to cut disconnect hundreds of thousands of people's SIM cards and them unable to communicate and without access to information. This is even more egregious because of the fact that there has not been enough dissemination of information to the mass citizenry about the SIM card registration process. The only logical

¹ Access to Information Act, 2022 (Act. No. 8 of 2022)

conclusion is that the Ministry must extend the deadline for the registration of SIM cards beyond 31 December 2023

I therefore ask the Honourable Minister:

1. Is it not logical, and prudent, that the Ministry considers extending the deadline for the registration of SIM cards beyond 31 December 2023?
2. Has the Ministry investigated the hesitation of citizens who are grappling to adhere to registration requisites? If so, how has the Ministry attempted to assure citizens of the process?
3. What collaborative efforts has the Ministry engaged in with mobile service providers, such as MTC, to activate a constituency-by-constituency registration approach, in an attempt to avoid cumbersome travels and prolonged waiting periods for citizens, especially in the rural areas?

I so submit