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ICT SECTOR CONTINUES ON ITS POSITIVE GROWTH TRAJECTORY IN 2021

The Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA) has released the 2021 Mid-Year Market performance report for the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Sector which demonstrates increased utilisation of ICT services in the country over the first half of 2021. Below are some highlights:

1) LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ICT SECTOR

By the end of June 2021, there were a total of seventy eight (78) valid licences in the ICT sector compared to eighty nine (89) valid licences recorded at the end of June, 2020. On the other hand, by the end of June, 2021, the Authority had issued a total of forty one (41) valid licenses to operators in the postal and courier services sector compared to thirty two (32) licences reported at the end of June, 2020.

The value of electronic money transactions increased from ZMW 43.1 billion recorded in the first half of 2020 to ZMW 76.0 billion recorded in the first half of 2021 reflecting an increase of 76.2 percent. However, the volume of electronic money transactions decreased from 424 million transactions recorded in the first half of 2020 to 358 million transactions recorded in the first half of 2021 reflecting a decrease of 15.6 percent.

The Government also constructed 783 communication towers out of the expected 1009 in a bid to complete the Phase II of the SMART Zambia communication tower project. According to the 2020 Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI), Zambia is ranked 73 globally and 10th in the Africa region.

2) PERFORMANCE OF THE ICT SECTOR

The total number of active mobile network subscriptions increased from 17.9 million subscriptions at the end of June, 2020 to 19.7 million subscriptions at the end of June, 2021 reflecting an increase of 9.8 percent.

The growth in mobile network subscriptions represents an improvement in the mobile penetration rate from 100.2 percent recorded at the end of June, 2020 to 107.0 percent recorded at the end of June, 2021. Domestic incoming mobile voice traffic increased marginally from 1.13 billion minutes recorded in the first half of

2020 to 1.24 billion minutes reported in the first half of 2021 reflecting an improvement of 11.0 percent.

Similarly, the total domestic outgoing minutes increased from 9.92 billion minutes recorded in the first half of 2020 to 11.20 billion minutes reported in the first half of 2021, representing an improvement of 12.8 percent.

Incoming international mobile voice traffic declined from 12.97 million minutes reported in the first half of 2020 to 10.54 million minutes reported in the first half of 2021 reflecting an overall reduction of 18.7 percent. Similarly, outgoing international mobile voice traffic declined by 41.8 percent, from 13.92 million minutes in June 2020 to 8.10 million in June 2021.

Based on the benchmarking of the per minute mobile voice headline tariffs for eleven (11) countries in the COMESA region, Zambia ranked fourth (4) cheapest country on all types of headline tariffs namely: *on-net* peak and off-peak and *off-net* peak and off-peak tariffs.

The total number of telecommunication sites that were operational in the country increased from 10,338 reported at the end of June, 2020 to 11,144 reported at the end of June, 2021 representing an increase of 7.8 percent. The mobile telephone subsector reported a 25.8 percent increase in revenue performance in the first half of 2021 compared to the same period in 2020.

Revenue increased from ZMW 2.41 billion in the first half of 2020 to ZMW 3.03 billion during the first half of 2021 on a year to date basis. Airtime sales and data sales continued to account for the largest proportion of revenue for the mobile telephone sector. However, a noted reduction in roaming charges as well as VAS of 17.5 percent and 32.3 percent respectively were observed during the period under review

The total number of active internet subscriptions in the country increased from 9.5 million subscriptions recorded by the end of the first half of 2020 to 10.5 million subscriptions reported at the end of June, 2021 reflecting an improvement of 9.5 percent. Consequently, the internet penetration rate increased from 52.9 percent to 55.3 percent between June, 2020 and June, 2021.

The Lit/equipped capacity for the first half of 2021 among the mobile cellular network operators increased by more than twofold to reach 237,594 Megabits per second (Mbps) from 102,378 Mbps reported in the first half of 2020. Overall, capacity usage increased by 31.7 percent during the review period.

The total number of telecommunication towers in Zambia increased from 3,328 reported at the end of the first half of 2020 to 3,409 reported at the end of the first half of 2021, representing an increase of 2.4 percent.

NOTE: The detailed Mid-year market Report is available on www.zicta.zm.

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