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Commercial Operations

Telecom Namibia has been in the forefront of developing and introducing new solutions for customers, supported by a variety of access technologies which are running on a single IP/MPLS platform.

New Products

During 2007/8 Telecom Namibia introduced the following into the market:

- EVDO-Broadband data services in October 2007.
- Metro Ethernet services in April 2008.
- Wireless Access Service providers to add SMS based content and competitions to the Switch product.
- Bulk SMS solution enabling the sending of high volumes of SMS to customers.
- A fixed mobile convergence product which allows the forwarding of calls from the fixed network to the Switch network. This makes it possible for customers not to miss those calls made to their phones while away. Call forwarding to the selected mobile Switch number is done free of charge.
- Prepaid EVDO service to cater for the pay-as-you-go customer that requires fast mobile Internet connectivity and enjoy the service within their planned budget.
- The revolutionary Fax2Email service allows customers to receive faxes as an attachment in their electronic inbox. The faxes are sent from traditional fax machines and are delivered as PDF attachment in your inbox all over the world.
- A standard layer 3 Virtual Private Network (VPN) services on the IP/MPLS cloud was developed to allow businesses to interconnect their satellite office(s) in a secure and cost effective manner.

Customer Contact Centre

Customer care is an integral part of Telecom Namibia's business model. On 11 July 2008 the Minister of Information and Communication Technology, Hon. Joel Kaapanda, officially launched the Telecom Namibia Customer Contact Centre in Windhoek.

Pricing and Tariffs

During the year, the company continued with the tariff re-balancing process, an initiative that is aimed at aligning tariffs to the costs of providing the different services. This initiative was supported by a number of product costing projects that were completed during the financial year, with special attention drawn to telephony services and other corporate data and network solutions.

Telecom Namibia implemented a tariffs reduction on average of 14% for international calls on 1 October 2007. The reduction was applicable for international destinations like Angola, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, USA, Spain, Australia, France, Portugal and the rest of the world. In addition, Inmarsat and international IP bandwidth tariffs were also reduced by 10%, line rental tariffs increased by 10%, and long-distance (>200km) national leased line tariffs cut by 13%.

As from 1 October 2007 international leased line tariff were slashed by 8% after another 10% drop implemented on 1 July 2007.

The introduction of full per second billing for all Switch calls on the Telecom Namibia networks for both prepaid and postpaid call plans on 1 October 2007. Customers are now billed in increments of one second from the first second without any set-up charges when making on-net Switch calls.

A number of bundled options for 3G-EVDO and 1X CDMA data were introduced in November 2007. With our CDMA data packages, customers can select from a variety of bundles based on their usage profiles at affordable flat rates. Discount structures were also put in place for most of our data services, such as IP/MPLS VPNs, MetroNet, Leased Lines and so on – all bundled with long-term contracts.

A new pricing model for the XNET Development Alliance Trust was developed and implemented during the year. This model allows schools and other educational institutions to benefit from subsidised rates through XNET with the aim of enhancing Internet access.

Furthermore, Telecom Namibia introduced monthly charges for 12-month contracts for ADSL and WiMAX packages in an effort to provide more choices for our internet users. A lower WiMAX package with access speed of 128 Kbps was introduced at an affordable flat rate mainly targeting users in the rural areas.

ICT and Corporate Business Solutions

Telecom Namibia offers high quality, reliable ICT technical and corporate business solutions to customers. The portfolio of offerings includes the following:

- Customer premises equipment (CPE)
- Value added services (VAS)
- Data services
- Internet Protocol services (IP)
- Internet access services (WWW)
- Virtual private networks (VPN)
- LAN, WAN, Intranet & Extranet services
- Structured cabling
- Least cost routing
- Co-location services
- Disaster recovery centre facilities
- Web hosting
- Web development
- Domain administration
- E-mail services
- Videoconferencing
- Consultancy services

The above offerings are bundled to satisfy the needs of the customers per segment. Customised solutions are offered by addressing each customer's individual needs and wants.

Access to the various services is provided via a range of access network technologies:

- Radio based services (Broadband Wireless, Multi Gain Wireless services, Wireless LAN services, Wi-Fi Hotspots, WiMAX, CDMA 1X and 3G-EvDO)
- Copper-based (analogue, HDSL, basic and primary ISDN, leased lines and ADSL)
- Fibre optic networks (MetroNET)
- Satellite (Faraway and Dial@way)

The pace of business is accelerating at a rapid rate, thereby never allowing a telecommunications service provider to be in a state of rest. The business world is continually reinventing itself to obtain a competitive advantage in a world where geographic distance is becoming insignificant. Similarly, countries are competing to obtain a competitive advantage in the global marketplace. The result of such competitive advantages is seen as wheels that drive long-term economic development which is expected to bring with it prosperity to the residents of the country.

Telecom Namibia is focused on addressing ICT convergence within Namibia by providing state-of-the-art ICT products and services to our customers.

iWAY

iWAY, Namibia's leading Internet Service Provider (ISP), has shown positive growth despite tremendous competition within this space.

iWAY operations were fully incorporated into Telecom Namibia and physically relocated to the corporate head office in Windhoek. The billing system was merged with the company billing system – known as ICMS - and the product range was broadened to include Telecom Namibia's broadband products. The change came as IWAY celebrated its 7th anniversary since its creation as a stand-alone ISP with a respected and trusted brand identity in the marketplace. .

Although market share battle within the Namibian ISP market will continue, the emphasis should also be on increasing ICT penetration countrywide. Major ISP and ICT players should not only embrace change, but also support initiatives such as the XNET Development Alliance Trust, for school connectivity.

Infinitum & Telematics (IP & DATA)

Telecom Namibia's IP backbone is the largest IP backbone in the country and was recently upgraded to be a carrier-grade IP/MPLS network that is capable of delivering next generation network (NGN) ICT products and services. During the past year the company continued to make huge capital investments to expand the international internet connectivity through global internet carrier partnerships with SAIX and Intelsat.

Telecom Namibia's IP and data communications have huge growth potential. Technological change is bringing new technologies to the Namibian market such as Wi-Fi, WiMAX, CDMA, ADSL, IP/MPLS and MetroNET.

During the last quarter of 2007, Telecom Namibia became the first service provider in Emerging Africa (excluding South Africa) to achieve Cisco Powered Programme Membership Status. High levels of quality, reliability and customer satisfaction have enabled Telecom Namibia to qualify for Cisco Powered Network (CPN) designation. The CPN endorsement follows closely on Telecom Namibia receiving "The Best IP Network of the Year" Award at the Cisco Networkers Conference held at Sun City, South Africa earlier in 2007.

Customer Premises Equipment (CPE)

Telecom Namibia provides a wide range of products, installation and maintenance services for the branch exchange (PBX) market. The CPE and PBX offering include a wide range of PBX, telephone management system (TMS) and least cost routing (LCR) products and services. The company remains highly competitive in the CPE and PBX market due to the fact that it is continuously investing in top quality technology and solutions through partnerships with leading brands.

ICT Consulting and Design

ICT consultants and project managers are focusing on technical network optimisation, network design, customised solutions and project management to address the ICT needs of our current and potential customers.

IT Infrastructure and OSS/BSS

IT Infrastructure within the company focuses mainly on server and storage consolidation, data lifecycle management and license/software management.

Operations Support Systems/Business Support Systems (OSS/BSS) focuses on improving and enhancing the existing billing (post and prepaid), mediation and ERP environments within Telecom Namibia, with the ultimate objective to provide accurate billing for customers.

The company's new e-commerce section managed to build capacity to deliver web design, web development and hosting services to customers. There is a growing use of the Internet and emerging Internet technology applications. The growth of e-commerce and Internet distribution channels will reduce cost in the local environment.

Annual ICT Summit 2008

Telecom Namibia organised its second Annual ICT Summit 2008 under the theme, "Sharing Collective Wisdom," highlighting and encouraging sharing and exchange of knowledge and experience. Real capacity growing in terms of ICT skills building and implementation of intelligent technologies in the Namibian and African context can only be achieved in a combined effort between decision makers.

The event brought together 600 participants from business counterparts, regulatory authority Namibian Communication Commission (NCC), relevant government bodies (Directorate of Communication, Revenue Authority, etc.), commercial banks, various suppliers

of equipment, insurance companies, and asset management companies to inform themselves, debate issues, share knowledge and expertise, see the latest technology developments.

Key topics covered areas such as Virtualisation, Unified Communications, and Enhancing quality of life through ICT, with a focus on areas such as education, health and entertainment. The use of ICT for Disaster Recovery and Management Emerging technologies such as VoIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol). The impact of next generation networks on service licensing. There were also a number of exhibition booths showcasing a wide range of products and solutions from around the world.

This year's summit not only marks the mid-point of our strategic roadmap towards 2010 but also symbolises our unwavering commitment to take our country and people into the information superhighway.

Service Provisioning and Assurance

Telecom Namibia strives to provide a high quality, reliable service in order to maximise customer satisfaction and enhance shareholder value. The focus is thus on ensuring that all access networks are in good shape to provide uninterrupted services to customers. By so doing, the company ensures that customer gets good service in all areas, guaranteed uptime and attending to all customer needs from corporate, medium and small enterprises to individual households.

There are about 408,000km of copper lines and a host of wireless technologies (VSAT, WiMAX and CDMA) deployed countrywide. Some rural communities served with old systems such as SOR-18 were converted to the wireless technologies. As of September 2008, 2,072 customers converted.

Despite the numerous challenges related to network sabotages like, fibre damages, solar panel and copper theft, we have still managed to maintain a higher network uptime. With copper thefts being so rampant, Telecom submitted that the theft, possession and conspiracy to the steal or sabotage "copper" be punished heftily.

Network Operations and Maintenance

The CDMA network shows increased service utilisation and has reached a 71% level, signaling the need for the next phase of the network expansion. A total of nine existing ADSL sites were expanded (a total of 1,184 new ports added) and four new ADSL sites were added (with a combined 160 ports capacity), bringing ADSL ports installed capacity to 12,606.

Traffic cutover to new OMS nodes and traffic protection is being carried out in steps. Express routes between major areas are established and traffic optimally routed. To date a total of 626 circuits for Telecom Namibia, MTC and Cell One's circuits are now protected. These include trunks for IP/MPLS, BSC trunks, interconnect traffic, trunks between primary exchanges, routes to SAIX and international voice traffic.

The activity to convert a selection of sites in Kunene from Solar to Grid Power is ongoing and work has started at Anabeb, Kaoko Otavi, Otjimotemba & Sesfontein for this conversion. This needs to be done to minimise solar panel theft that costs the company a lot of money.

Foreign Ventures

We also do not only call our neighbours, but work with them to improve telecommunications in the region. Telecom Namibia is a shareholder in the second network operator in South Africa, Neotel. We are proud to be a partner in Neotel that is now in operation with a full fibre backbone between main centres and with both metro fibre and radio connections to connect to customers.

Neotel has launched their services via three Business Units focussing on three main market segments of wholesale, enterprise and consumer. To serve the market without having to lay copper cables, Neotel has built both a CDMA as well as WiMAX network in the main cities. To date Gauteng and Cape Town are served; and will be followed soon by Durban. As part of this strategy, Neotel and Telecom Namibia will be connecting at the RSA/Namibia borders in order to facilitate Telecom Namibia acces to it's Sat-3 landing point in Cape Town.

In Angola, Telecom Namibia is also the managing partner of Mundo Startel, a start-up operator. The Angolan market is very tough to enter and we are just now ready to launch services after an extended start-up period.

Mundo Startel has set up a main operations centre on the periphery of the Central Business District of Luanda and from there will serve its customers via a high capacity microwave ring system in the city. During the next year this will be extended to Luanda Sul and two more centres and thereafter to the rest of Angola. Customers are served with WiMAX to offer Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), internet and voice services. Telecom Namibia is represented on site by the Mundo Startel's Managing Director, as well as the Financial and Technical heads.


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Technology Update

Namibia's economic development depends to a large extent on our telecommunication capabilities. The country is well positioned in this sector thanks to investment into fixed networks, mobile broadband, ADSL, fixed wireless broadband and so on. Namibia can boast as one of the best developed in terms of a digital telecommunication network infrastructure in Africa.

Government has mandated Telecom Namibia to lead efforts in strengthening of our telecommunications capacity and the possibility of direct access to the world wide network of cable systems through a submarine cable link. Towards that end, the Government has provided financial guarantee for Telecom Namibia to participate in the West African Coast Cable System (WACS) project, as a means of bringing cheap broadband to the country through the development of this undersea cable system and a terrestrial fibre optic network. An investment level of 2% for Telecom Namibia is envisaged in this 3.84 Tbps 4 fibre Cape Town to the UK system being built at an estimated cost estimate of U$ 550 million. Our share of the capacity of 3.84 Tbps will be sufficient for the country's needs for more than 10 years.

Total capital expenditure for 2007/08 amounted to N$260 million, a decrease of N$86 million compared to 2006/07.

The growth in Telecom Namibia's capital expenditure reflected increased investment in customer service capability, broadband capacity and coverage and upgrade of SDH backbone network from STM-1 to TM-64 to meet the capacity requirements of the IP/MPLS core infrastructure.

Some of the important projects implemented during the year to meet the company's 2010 targets as set out in its Strategic Blueprint include the following:

Internet Protocol / Multiprotocol Label System (IP/MPLS)

The IP/MPLS network was rolled out countrywide in the following way:

- Four super points of presence (PoPs) in Windhoek with fully meshed fibre backbone routes between all on 10 GB capacity.
- Keetmanshoop, Walvis Bay, Tsumeb and Oshakati have each a major PoP interconnected on 1 GB pipes running on the SDH backbone network.
- To take the IP networks even closer to the customers, minor PoPs were set up in Luderitz, Gobabis, Otjiwarongo, Rundu and Katima Mulilo. The next batch of micro PoPs is in the design stage.

IP backbone traffic is already running on this platform, e.g. the ADSL internet traffic between PoPs, four Windhoek WiMAX base stations, Infinitum and Digicon traffic and the EWSD softswitch traffic. The migration of the CDMA network onto the MPLS network is in full swing.

Asymmetrical Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL)

ADSL services are well established with a good take up of more than 6 000 users. Presently there are 34 towns with an ADSL infrastructure. The network capacity and coverage is being expanded constantly due to demand and traffic. To guarantee broadband service quality (data speed) the backhauling capacities are being expanded continually and being connected to the new PoPs of the MPLS network.

WIMAX

Thirty-five base stations are in service spread all over the area between Keetmanshoop, the Kavango and the coastal areas. This technology is mainly used for "ADSL-like services over the air" in urban areas as well as for long distance coverage for voice and data/ Internet services in rural areas.

As an IP/NGN ready system with long distance coverage capability, WiMAX makes itself an ideal future-proof solution for Namibia's rural challenges. The intention is to make WiMAX the de-facto rural NGN network over time, covering large swathes of the country.

WiMAX can be used for normal FWLL voice services and for always-on Internet broadband services over long distances. This system is suitable to replace legacy rural systems, especially the old wire-based networks.

WiMAX is also Telecom Namibia's first true full-IP access network up to the customer's premises, although initially the voice is routed via V5.2 interfacing into the EWSD voice network due to lack of IP voice networks.

In the meantime the Windhoek base stations were migrated to the IP/MPLS backbone network via MetroNet. This has now put in place the very basic end-to-end IP access network requirements and adding now the SIP-Server platform allows for future SIP-telephony and VoIP services/features.
Integrated as part of the current WiMAX product, Telecom Namibia

has a WI² unit which allows very quick and solid WiFi/Hotspot services by using WiMAX as the backbone for WiFi. It is one single unit with "WiMAX-in/WiFi-out" which requires only power supply for quick roll-out. Due to its very good coverage area, this unit is the ideal solution for public Hotspots.

Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA)

59 sites are in full service in the main towns of the country to provide Switch services, both mobile voice and data. Twenty of the sites are equipped with EVDO for 3G services. EVDO capacities will be expanded and rolled out further with additional stations during 2009. In particular, Windhoek will have additional base stations and 3G-EVDO capacity in the city was already doubled by an additional carrier.

The 3G EVDO network is technically separated from the voice/1X network as the 3G is directly linked to the IP network (always-on-IP). This 3G-EVDO traffic will soon be carried via the MPLS network when the migration is done. In addition, international SMS service was added to the features of the Switch service during the year.

MetroNet

The MetroNet is a new network to provide Ethernet services to corporate customers as well as serving as aggregation (feeder) network between IP access networks (ADSL, WiMAX) and MPLS and backbone.

MetroNet Ethernet nodes are installed at all major points of presence (PoPs) at Keetmanshoop, Walvis Bay, Tsumeb and Oshakati, and at additional minor PoPs at Luderitz, Gobabis, Otjiwarongo, Rundu and Katima Mulilo, as well as at micro PoPs in the country to shorten the backhauling networks and distances for DSLAMs, WiMAX base stations and corporate customer networks to reach as quick as possible the MPLS IP backbone.

MetroNet Ethernet provides 10BT, 100BT and 1GE IP backhauling connections although the target is to enable 10GE pipes as soon as such technology is available and integrated into MPLS.

Backbone fibre ring networks with SDH STM-64 expansion

The Omaheke backbone ring between Gobabis via Epukiro to Grootfontein was closed by aerial fibre cable and connected at Grootfontein to the existing SDH network. This connection now provides for an alternative route to the north from Windhoek via Gobabis, Epukiro, Otjinene, Okamatapati and Grootfontein to Tsumeb.

The SDH transmission system was simultaneously upgraded to STM-64 (i.e. equal to 10G capacity to match the MPLS standards) all the way from Walvis Bay via Karibib, Okahandja, Windhoek, Gobabis, Grootfontein to Tsumeb and then to the Buitepos borderpost to Botswana.

Traffic for the STM-64 stations along the route now runs on the new transmission network. An alternative STM-1 pipe from Windhoek to Oshakati was provided as alternative route for the cellular operator and for Telecom Namibia's major core networks.

Civil fibre construction works started for the closure of the Erongo ring (Henties Bay–Kamanjab). This project will include a new aerial fibre cable between Tsumeb to Oshakati as the existing cable does not meet STM-64 specifications (this is first fibre cable in Namibia in 1988 and has only four fibres). Under this project, the total Erongo-Kunene backbone rings are to be upgraded to STM-64 capacity during 2009.

Before the end of 2008, two existing backbone routes, i.e. Karibib–Otjiwarongo–Grootfontein and the Otjiwarongo–Kamanjab, will be upgraded to STM-64 to complement the Omaheke ring.

By mid-2009 the total backbone network from Windhoek to Oshakati will be ring protected with STM-64 (i.e. 10G) capacity.

Neotel Link

Construction works from Karasburg through Warmbad to Velloorsdrift to provide for the direct link to Neotel, South Africa's second telecommunications operator, at Velloorsdrift was started and was scheduled for completion December 2008. This new interconnect route is envisaged to provide voice and data and Internet services with Neotel.

Zambia

A direct fibre connection was provided and commissioned at Katima Mulilo to connect to Zesco in Zambia. The direct transmission route between Windhoek and Lusaka is now being tested and configured.

Making EWSD Switches NGN Ready

The EWSD switches and the company's two international gateways were made NGN-ready. While these will continue with the traditional voice services and traffic handling, they are ready for new NGN/IP services and IP interconnectivity.

All EWSD exchanges were upgraded to the latest V17 hardware and software standard to allow for the coming NGN roadmap. In addition, a softswitch was installed at IDU/ISC-2 and Media Gateways (MGW) at IDU/ISC-2 and Oshakati to allow Mobile Telecommunications (MTC) direct backbone connectivity at their second mobile switch in Oshakati.

This NGN-ready switching infrastructure was also successfully migrated and interconnected to the IP/MPLS platform.

A second softswitch is to be installed at ISC-1 for essential redundancy as well as MGW's at all six primary exchanges to replace the current local processor networks which will then function centrally off the softswitches.

The new V17 software platform now allows for many new value-adding features and services for commercial business and revenue enhancement, like CLIP, CLIR, Centrex, FL-SMS, etc.


sharing your world

Corporate Social Responsibility Report

Social responsibility is one of the main values of Telecom Namibia. Every year, the company spends millions of dollars on its social policies.

Since its inception in 1992, Telecom Namibia has committed millions of dollars towards service provisioning to the remotest of poor areas, on education, training, sports and culture, charity and relief of poverty.

In other words, Telecom Namibia plays an important role in the lives of many Namibians, in the national economy, and in the telecommunication industry. Against an ever more competitive and challenging backdrop, the company remains committed to leading not only from a business standpoint, but economically, socially and environmentally as well.

With so many people depending on the continued success of our company, we remain intensely focused on delivering strong results, with great products and services, sustained profitability, lower emissions through environmentally friendly services (e.g. videoconferencing), strong community involvement and exemplary corporate citizenship. While living up to this commitment is at times very challenging, the men and women of Telecom Namibia are making important and measurable progress.

Paying VAT for the Public

The greatest test of our commitment to social responsibility came on 15 January 2008 when the Receiver of Revenue publicly announced an imposition of a 15% value added tax (VAT) on all telecommunication pre-paid products. Naturally, this was a matter of great concern to the consumers of these products. The new ruling was implemented on 1 February 2008.

Telecom Namibia is very cognisant of the impact any rise in the cost of telecommunication services will have on ordinary Namibians, who are largely the consumers of these products. Here we have in mind a huge number of prepaid card users most of whom are students and non-income earners, for whom the imposition of the VAT would therefore, worsen their financial plight. Thus the company's decision represents an effort to bring relief to the vulnerable groups most susceptible to the increased inflation that the VAT can cause.

As a caring organisation, Telecom Namibia again led by example, by extending the corporate responsibility towards the mainstream consumer in paying the VAT for each and every prepaid user. This was a milestone for us as the company had to tighten its belt in order to assist the public, the end-users.

Assistance During Natural Calamities

Telecom Namibia always remains awake to its responsibility as a corporate citizen. When the flooding occurred in the northern regions, the company swung into action immediately for providing relief to the affected comunities. Communication networks at towns and telephone services were restored in record time in the flood-hit regions of Oshana and Omusati, villages were promptly restored within the shortest possible time. Telecom Namibia contributed an amount of N$150 000 to the Namibia Disaster Relief Fund.

Learning and Development Opportunities

We continue to improve our employee engagement programme with a focus on staff retention through learning and development opportunities with leadership and technical skills development. This is a critical area which we will continue to develop over the coming year, as our people are essential to the success of our business.

Supporting ICT Education

At the social level, like other telecom providers in Africa, we are seized by issues that relate to the digital inclusion and the creation of a Knowledge Society. In this context, Telecom Namibia supports the Government's ICT initiative, Tech! Na, which is designed to contribute strongly to the digital inclusion of the population.

We have also teamed up with the XNet Development Alliance Trust in an innovative partnership which is bound to make a strong and long-lasting impact in an area of priority for Namibia, namely ICT rollout in schools.

A new pricing model for the XNET Development Alliance Trust was developed and implemented during the year. This model allows schools and other educational institutions to benefit from subsidised rates through XNET with the aim of enhancing Internet access.

Universal Access

Telecom Namibia continues to invest millions of dollars and substantial technical resources in providing services to disadvantaged sections of the society, with the aim of realising the dream of universal access for Namibians. A typical example in this regard, was the installation of a VSAT system for the Ovatua community at Ohaiua in the Kunene region.

UN Global Compact Initiative

During the year, Telecom Namibia joined the United Nations Global Compact through the Network Namibia. The local chapter was launched on April 23, 2008 under the auspices of the Namibian Employers' Federation to serve as a platform to engage the private sector in positive corporate practices.

The Compact is an initiative to encourage businesses worldwide to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies and procedures, focused on addressing human rights issues, labour, environmental concerns, transparency and anti-corruption.

Nova Vita

Nova Vita is a rehabilitation centre which helps drug addicts to regain sobriety. Potential beneficiaries include Telecom Namibia's employees, staff of other private companies, government workers and community members at large.

The rehab centre continues to attract a large number of patients. This year five employees laudably joined the rehab programme.

Sport

For Telecom Namibia, sport in general is not viewed as a peripheral activity, but as a modern way of life, just as important in its own way as academic excellence or industrial success. Thus, the company is a big sponsor of boxing and netball in Namibia. By supporting boxing and netball, Telecom Namibia is making a contribution to the upliftment of current and future boxers/netballers, thus making a positive difference in the lives of so many young people.

Health, Safety & Environment

Telecom Namibia is serious about safety, health and environment (SHE) issues and deliberate efforts are made to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and establishing best practices in employee safety and wellbeing. The company made significant progress during the year in managing and mitigating various occupational health, safety and employee wellness risk factors, as well as in improving and extending our SHE reporting structures.

Audits with regard to safety were done throughout the year to ensure legal compliance. Installation of first aid kits as well as training in fire fighting and first aid were carried out. The Managing Director reiterated his commitment to ensuring a safer working environment for all Telecom Namibia employees by appointing in writing all General Managers to take care of Health and Safety in their respective Divisions.

The wellness of our employees is an important indicator of our people's ability to effectively and efficiently perform their roles. The following initiatives aim to improve our employees' wellness:
Employees are our most valued asset, and their safety is of the utmost concern. By working with our employees and union partners, our workplaces throughout the country have experienced little or no job-related injuries over the past year. The few injuries on duty experienced during the year resulted mainly from motor vehicle accidents.

SHE training and awareness sessions are conducted to assist employees to gain the knowledge necessary for a safer and healthier working environment.

The number of employees on anti-retroviral therapy continues to increase, i.e. from 105 at the start of the financial year to 118 as at 30 September 2008. The increase is attributable to a comprehensive HIV/AIDS awareness sessions being carried out within the company.

Several HIV/AIDS materials (educational booklets, leaflets, posters, and condoms) were distributed. HIV/AIDS specific educational/awareness sessions were also carried out both in Windhoek and in the Regions with the assistance of our Wellness Educators.

In 2008, 32 wellness educators were appointed and trained. The training was to equip and update the educators with the necessary information on physical wellness, mental wellness, socio-economical wellness and HIV/AIDS.

The company for the first time defined the medical surveillance requirements for its various job categories and will in the new financial year implement medical screenings to ensure the adequate management of critical safety and health risks.

Our wellness programme provides employees and their direct families with personal assistance to address personal needs, for example face-to-face trauma counselling. Stress related ailments and absenteeism necessitated information/awareness sessions on stress management to employees. These programmes have helped to remove distracting factors from the minds of employees, leaving them time and energy to focus on the job at hand.

Several wellness days were observed, including the World AIDS Day (1 December), World Cancer Day (4 February), World Tobacco Day (31 May) and International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (26 June). The objective was to raise awareness of these conditions and to encourage their prevention, detection and treatment. A cancer awareness week was held during which we did cancer testing, 'pap smear' for ladies and prostate testing for men.