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Telecom Namibia Limited is a national telecommunications operator, established in August 1992 and wholly owned by the Government of the Republic of Namibia. Telecom Namibia is functioning as a commercialised company and as a subsidiary of its parent company, Namibia Post and Telecom Holdings Limited.



Dr. Stanley Shanapinda, CEO of Telecom Namibia, Prof. Kenneth Matengu, UNAM's Vice-Chancellor, and H.E. Alka Bhatia, UNDP Resident Representative

### HOME GROWN SOLUTIONS TO HOME GROWN PROBLEMS – THE CHANCELLORS INNOVATION FUND

The University of Namibia recently launched the Chancellors' Innovation Fund, on the 18 February 2021, at the UNAM Leisure Centre. Telecom Namibia is the main sponsor of the Fund, which is geared towards providing for the development of capacity, nurturing of local talent, promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship through product development innovation, innovation idealization, business pitching techniques and harnessing partnerships with the private sector for socioeconomic empowerment.

The launch was attended by various dignitaries, namely, the Vice President of Namibia H.E. Dr Nangolo Mbumba, who is also the Chancellor of the University of Namibia, the Vice-Chancellor Prof. Kenneth Matengu, the CEO of Telecom Namibia, Dr. Stanley Shanapinda, Mr. Sam Shivute, in his capacity as Chairperson: UNAM Council and H.E Alka Bhatia, UNDP Resident Representative, amongst others.

The CEO of Telecom Namibia, Dr. Stanley Shanapinda, in his speech could not contain his excitement of the possibilities that can come through this partnership, " Through this collaborative effort we set out to enable participants of the fund to take their innovative concept and ideas to tangible products and services, offered to the Namibian market and beyond. I am therefore ecstatic to be here as we bring to live a vision aimed at enhancing opportunities for translating research and development into commercial products and services that can help bring life into the Namibian economy."

"Today is a joyful occasion, an occasion where we celebrate the start of endless possibilities, possibilities visualized by young brilliant

minds which will be brought to formation through the joined efforts of TN and UNAM under the umbrella of the Chancellors Innovation Fund," he added.

Dr Shanapinda said TN lives by its philosophy which is to pay it forward, and through this partnership, TN will do just that. "As much as the community looks to us for services and world class ICT solutions we rely on the communities to sustain our business operations, and it is thus befitting, that we pay it forward and by allowing more Namibians to become innovators and entrepreneurs."

The purpose of the Innovation Call is to provide an opportunity to UNAM researchers and students to present their innovative business ideas that will lead to commercially viable products and/or improvement of processes in cases where such outputs of such innovations are non-commercial.

Dr. Shanapinda stated that through this program TN envisage creating job opportunities and stimulating trade and economic activity through the new products and services that will be developed. He concluded by confirming the challenges faced by Telecom Namibia and the ICT sector at large. However he was confident that UNAM has the talent in assisting to come up with viable solutions.

"We know the challenges we have in Telecom Namibia, we know the solutions we want and we know UNAM has the talent to find us those solutions and so it is so obvious that we had to partner with UNAM. I say, home grown solution to home grown problems," he concluded.

### TELECOM AND PARATUS ANNOUNCE MAJOR AGREEMENT TO CONNECT NAMIBIA TO GOOGLE'S NEW UNDERSEA CABLE

Telecom Namibia and Paratus have signed an agreement to land the subsea cable, Equiano, in Namibia. It will also, critically, provide Namibian networks and their customers with greater capacity, enabling more product options that can stimulate economic growth and support a competitive telecommunication sector.

The agreement is not a Public Private Partnership (PPP) in terms of the definition of the Public Private Partnership Act 4 of 2017. Reference to a partnership connotes collaboration between the public and private entity. The parties entered into an Indefeasible Right of Use (IRU) agreement which is a type of telecommunications lease agreement. An IRU contract allows the customer uninterrupted and exclusive use and access to spectrum capacity.

In 2019, Google first announced its subsea cable project, Equiano, would connect Africa with Europe, running along the west coast of Africa, between Portugal and South Africa. Google's Equiano cable incorporates new technology that enables approximately 20 times more network capacity than the existing WACS cable. To serve this region and provides flexibility to add and reallocate capacity in different locations as needed.

Named Equiano in honour of a Nigerian-born writer and abolitionist, Olaudah Equiano, the new cable is expected to be completed during 2022 with the Namibian landing station scheduled for this year.

Telecom Namibian CEO, Dr. Stanley Shanapinda in his speech mentioned that his company is pleased to be part of this partnership as this enhances routing diversity and gives TN better leverage at offering uninterrupted internet connectivity to customers. "This includes customers across Namibia, and beyond the borders - the landlocked southern African countries we serve."

Similarly, in his speech he highlighted the role of ICT as an essential service and a daily necessity, for personal and for professional use. "As more Namibians work from home and attend school online, the demand for faster speeds and reliable connectivity requires of us to have various options of high quality, to satisfy the constantly evolving needs of our customers. The Equiano cable allows us to do so," he said.

The co-operation between Paratus and Telecom Namibia reflects the spirit and objectives of the Communications Act, as envisioned by the Namibian government. Collaboration by local operators is proving that the benefits of cooperation are far-reaching not only for customers but also for the entire ICT market in Namibia and beyond.

The increased capacity from the Equiano cable will provide Namibia with the necessary redundancy as a connectivity backup, a requirement that became evident when WACS & SAT3 subsea cable outages were experienced by various operators recently and which resulted in significant Internet downtime and adverse effects for those businesses in Namibia and the SADC that did not have redundant connectivity solutions.

"I want to thank our co-investors Paratus Namibia and Demshi Investment Holdings. I want to thank the Telecom Namibia team that worked tirelessly to make this occasion a reality. This is what's possible when competitors join in strategic collaboration, the first of many to come," Dr. Shanapinda concluded.



Dr. Stanley Shanapinda, CEO of Telecom Namibia and Barney Harmse, Paratus Group's Chief Executive