

Statement by CCK during a press briefing on the switch-off of unregistered SIM cards held at CCK Centre on 31st December 2012

Ladies and gentlemen of the media

It will be recalled that in July 2009, the President directed that all active SIM cards in the country be registered. The directive was inspired by the need to stem the rising incidences of mobile phone perpetrated crimes, including kidnaps, extortion, hate speech, money laundering and drug trafficking.

Subsequently, CCK, in collaboration with the mobile telecoms industry, developed ‘Guidelines for the Registration of Communications Services’ for use in the registration of subscribers. In May 2010, the Commission launched a three-month media campaign calling on consumers to register all active SIM cards in order to assist the Government in dealing with escalating incidences of crime and insecurity.

I am pleased to note that the initial media campaign was quite successful as the proportion of registered SIM cards rose from 41% to 81%. Over time and due to cut-throat competition in the market as well as lack of an enabling legal framework, SIM card vendors relapsed to their old ways of selling SIM cards without first registering them. As a result, the proportion of the registered SIM cards fell below 70% within a year, putting the country at a greater security risk in view of the increasing levels of terrorist attacks, hate speech and other forms of crime.

In light of the foregoing, and in order to expeditiously seal the existing legal loopholes, the Government, through *The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act No 12 of 2012*, amended the *Kenya Information and Communications Act, Cap 411A*, to provide for the registration of telecommunication subscribers and to require mobile operators to maintain a register of all persons to whom telecommunications services are provided under the licence. I wish to thank the Government for facilitating the review of the law and thus making it easier to undertake this important exercise.

Ladies and gentlemen, in light of the foregoing review of the law, the Commission has in the last six months been reminding subscribers to register their active SIM cards, including those used in tablet computers and Internet modems, by 31st December 2012, or risk having their lines switched off.

Indeed, in the past one month, the Commission has been running a media campaign calling on consumers to register all their mobile lines or SIM cards. The mobile network operators have complemented our public awareness effort by rolling out their own campaigns through various platforms. I wish to thank the mobile telecoms industry for joining hands with us in sensitizing consumers on the importance of registering their mobile lines.

I am pleased to note that majority of consumers have heeded our appeal to register their SIM cards. As at 28th December 2012, 80.1% of all active mobile lines in the country had been registered. I wish to call on those who have not registered their mobile lines to do so immediately, as the Commission has no intention, whatsoever, of extending the deadline beyond today. By midnight today, all unregistered SIM cards shall therefore be suspended from service without fail.

Going forward, owners of SIM cards suspended from service will have only 90 days within which to register their lines starting from today. All SIM cards suspended from service that will not have been registered by the end of the 90 days will be de-activated permanently and the numbers made available for re-assignment to new subscribers.

Ladies and gentlemen, the liberalization of the mobile telecoms market has witnessed massive uptake of mobile telecommunications services in our country. To date, Kenya has more than 30million mobile subscribers, and close to 15 million regular Internet users. Our ICT sector has won global acclaim for innovation, particularly in mobile money services and other financial applications and services. As the ICT sector regulator, CCK shall continue to foster sector growth and innovation with a view to ensuring that ICTs remain one of the key drivers of growth of our economy.

To deliver on the sector targets as set out in Vision 2030, we have an obligation as an industry to ensure that public confidence in ICTs is maintained and enhanced by making all communications platforms, including mobile telephony, secure. Usage of ICTs must also be in furtherance of the wider good of society and our economy. The use of mobile handsets for hate speech, terrorism and other forms of crimes has no place in the secure and safe Kenya that we all aspire to. The switch off of unregistered SIM cards and the recent deactivation of counterfeit mobile handsets should be seen from this perspective.

As I conclude, I wish to note here that with the deactivation of counterfeit handsets and registration of all active SIM cards, law enforcement agencies shall now find it easier to track down those using mobile phones for criminal activities. This is particularly important in securing our country as the Nation prepares for the next General Elections in March 2013. The days of purchasing SIM cards and discarding them at will after misuse are now over. Ultimately, this will go a long way in minimizing the misuse of our telecommunications numbering resources.

Thank you for your attention.

[Statement read by Mutua Muthusi, Director/Consumer and Public Affairs, on behalf of the CCK Director General]

Current SIM card registration details

Operator	Registered Subs	Unregistered subs	Total Subs	% Registered subs
Airtel	3,877,475	822,526	4,700,001	82.5%
Essar	2,101,602	1,131,632	3,233,234	65.0%
Orange	2,106,250	1,200,097	3,306,347	63.7%
Safaricom	16,700,000	2,900,000	19,600,000	85.2%
Total	24,785,327	6,054,255	30,839,582	80.4%