

Media Release

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To all media houses,

Ministers Agree on Implementation of Single Digital Market

Four (4) Ministers of ICT of the Republics of Botswana, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe met on the sidelines of the 6th Transform Africa Summit held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe from 25 -28 April 2023, and agreed to collaborate on accelerating implementation of the Single Digital Market for Africa Initiative.

Single Digital Market for Africa initiative is driven by the Smart Africa Trust Alliance through which African Heads of State and Governments have made a commitment to fast-track sustainable socio-economic development on the continent, by harmonising policies, regulations and ushering Africa into a knowledge economy through affordable access to Broadband internet and usage of ICTs.

Smart Africa's vision aspires to transform the continent into a single digital market through several interventions within the field of ICT. In line with this dream, the four Ministers of SADC Member States agreed for their countries to accelerate implementation of the single digital market concept



by leveraging on available quick wins. Subsequent to the meeting of Ministers, officials from Communications Regulatory Authorities of the participating member states met to identify some of the quick wins that may be implemented. Several initiatives including reduction of regional roaming tariffs, promotion of cybersecurity and data protection were highlighted as some possible candidates for implementation. At the moment, there is no concrete roadmap on what form and shape these initiatives would take as policy makers and regulators from participating member states are still doing the groundwork. However, it is worth noting that a few years back the SADC Ministers responsible for ICTs directed, the Communications Regulators' Association of Southern Africa (CRASA) to ensure that roaming tariffs within SADC were reduced.

The directive was to be implemented in three stages. The first stage being transparency stage, where telecommunications operators were required to send SMS alerts to all their customers travelling between SADC states, informing them of applicable roaming tariffs. This requirement has since been implemented. The second stage was termed Roam Like at Home where telecommunications operators were required to reduce their roaming tariffs to make the service more affordable. The third and final stage required CRASA to use a cost-based model to determine suitable roaming tariffs for the region. The implementation of this ministerial directive stalled when it was realised that there were limitations in the legislations of some SADC member states that made it difficult for regulators to enforce the tariff reduction requirement.



The current collaboration is still very much at planning stage and details regarding the specific initiatives to be implemented and timelines are yet to be agreed and communicated by all the four cooperating states.

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