

Subject: Proposal to Amend Data Expiration Regulations

Dear ICASA Commissioners,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the current regulations governing data expiration imposed by telecommunications companies in South Africa. The practice of expiring unused data after 30 days, unless customers recharge with the exact same amount, disproportionately affects the most economically vulnerable individuals in our society. As a regulatory body responsible for ensuring fair practices within the telecommunications industry, I urge ICASA to consider amending these regulations to better serve the interests of consumers.

The current policy creates a significant barrier to accessing essential communication services for those who can least afford it. Many individuals, particularly the poorest of the poor, are forced to purchase small amounts of data and use it sparingly due to financial constraints. Consequently, they often find themselves unable to utilize their remaining data before it expires, resulting in wasted resources and limited access to critical information and services.

In light of these concerns, I propose that ICASA amend the regulations to stipulate that data should never expire until fully utilized, regardless of the time taken to consume it. This change would not only ensure that consumers receive fair treatment from

telecommunications providers but also promote digital inclusion and equitable access to communication services for all citizens.

Furthermore, to prevent potential abuse by telecommunications companies seeking to recoup losses from extended data expiration periods, ICASA should implement safeguards to monitor and regulate tariff adjustments. This would help maintain affordability for consumers while still allowing telecommunications companies to operate sustainably within a competitive market.

In conclusion, I urge ICASA to prioritize the interests of consumers by amending the regulations to prohibit data expiration until fully utilized. This change would align with international best practices and demonstrate South Africa's commitment to promoting digital equity and inclusion for all its citizens.

Thank you for considering this proposal. I look forward to your prompt action on this matter.

Kind Regards from the Beautiful Garden Route, George

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