

Communications Operators advised on Regulations

By Richard Muliisa

Communications Operators attending a two day workshop on the regulation of telecommunications have been told to ensure that the existing operators does not charge predatory prices to discourage firms from entering the market, The Business Times can reveal.

British Communication professional, Professor David Mellor, an expert in communication for over 40 years conducted the workshop said that the regulator ensures fair competition between the operators.

The workshop which was organised by the Rwanda Utility Regulatory Agency (RURA) was held at Kigali Institute of Science and Technology. The workshop was attended by the Managing Director of RURA, Francois Zimurinda, Representatives also attended the workshop from the MIBINFRA, SIMTEL, TERRACOM, MTN and Internet Service Provider Africa (ISPA) among others.

It was also disclosed that the privatisation of a monopoly paves the way for increased competition, provision of financing for sector development. Among other res covered during the workshop was interconnecting, where in case of the conflict or disagreement between the communication service providers, the regulator intervenes to set a medium position.

Among the issues that were addressed for transparency in regulation, it is for a regulator to be impartial and independent from any influence. The ability of a regulator to provide market confidence amongst the operator was also identified as paramount for sector development.

Francois Zimurinda told the Business Times, that the workshop marks the beginning of a series of workshops whose aim is to promote the understanding of the regulatory agency and improve on the services offered to the public. “Many operators don’t understand the use of a regulatory agency, we normally hold meetings with other utility agencies to streamline their services” he observed. Zimurinda said it is the only workshop that RURA had organised since he assumed office “it is a workshop for communication operators, because the sector has a clear sectorial law”. Zimurinda observed that the public, also ought to know more about the use of the regulatory agency.

Jean Claude Mvuyikongo, one of the participants from RURA told the Business Times that “it will help to improve my knowledge in the area off telecommunication”. He added that he will also be in position to know the basic practices from the regulatory authorities.

“We (the operators), were not informed about the laws that govern telecommunication and what we can do to develop the communication sector”, noted David Mugume from ICT department MININFRA. To Daniel Murenzi, a field engineer from ISPA, there was a challenge of understanding the role of the regulatory agency, we had some problems with frequencies and network management but I believe with such a workshop such challenges can effectively be solved”.

During the training, Professor David Mellor issued books covering telecommunication Law written by him and Professor Ian Lloyd and published by Lexis Nexis UK 2003.