



# PRESS STATEMENT

## MOBILE DATA PRICES IN ZIMBABWE: FACTS AND FIGURES



'creating a level playing field'

The Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe would like to advise the public to ignore a misleading infographic circulating on social media that is portraying Zimbabwe as having the most expensive data tariffs in Africa, with 1 Gigabyte (GB) of mobile data costing USD75.20. This emanated from a study done in 2019 by howmuch.net that is published on the cable.co.uk website. The circulated infographic is outdated and inaccurate as it does not reflect the true state of affairs during 2019 as well as what is obtaining now in Zimbabwe and other SADC countries.

Data collected from the Country Reports of the Communication Regulators' Association of Southern Africa (CRASA) for 2019, reveals that the tariffs for mobile data that were used for comparison purposes in the deceptive study, are not in sync with charges that were obtaining in some SADC countries in 2019. Table 1 below shows a comparison of the out-of-bundle mobile data tariffs inclusive of taxes for some SADC countries against what is published on the cable.co.uk website;

**Table 1: Out-of-Bundle Mobile Data Cost Benchmark (inclusive of taxes)**

Country	Out of Bundle Mobile Data Tariff (in Local Currency)	Out of Bundle Mobile Data Tariff in US\$	1GB Out of Bundle Mobile data tariff	1 GB tariffs from the HowMuch.Net report
South Africa	R0.154	US\$0.011	US\$11	US\$7.19
Lesotho	LSL 0.31	US\$0.022	US\$22	US\$2.43
Malawi	MWK 31.5	US\$0.043	US\$43	US\$3.59
Eswatini	SZL0.8	US\$0.056	US\$56	US\$12.14
Zimbabwe	ZWL1.27	US\$0.0155	US\$15.5	US\$75.2
Botswana	P0.099	US\$0.0092	US\$9	US\$15.12
Mozambique	MZN0.824	US\$0.013	US\$13	US\$15.83

From Table 1 above, it is glaring that the circulating report is flawed and not reflective of the true situation on the ground. Accordingly, this report must be dismissed with the disgust and contempt it deserves by a nation that is seeking to find its economic space in the world, through attracting investment into the country.

Furthermore, it is also pertinent to disclose that the same organisation conducted another study in 2020 which is published on their website www.cable.co.uk. The 2020 study excluded Zimbabwe, due to confusion and problems with currency and exchange rate conversions on the part of the researchers, which did not allow for meaningful comparison. This could have been the same problem that gave the wrong prices for data for Zimbabwe in the 2019 Survey.

As a way forward, POTRAZ has done computations using the official exchange rate in order to compare with results from the 2020 study published on the cable.co.uk website. The computations show that retail mobile data tariffs in Zimbabwe are relatively cheaper and comparable within the SADC region and beyond as shown in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Mobile data bundle tariffs in the SADC Region and beyond**

Country	Cheapest price/Gig	Average (USD) price	Most expensive Price/1Gig (USD)	Global ranking out of 228 countries
Angola	1.41	5.29	10.00	170
Botswana	9.00	13.87	32.73	215
Kenya	0.27	1.05	10.27	41
Lesotho	0.53	2.13	10.65	86
Madagascar	2.91	8.81	50.20	193
Malawi	21.92	27.41	27.41	223
Mozambique	2.96	3.33	51.65	123
Namibia	1.84	4.78	52.15	159
South Africa	0.32	4.30	30.47	148
Tanzania	0.30	0.73	2.89	23
Zambia	0.68	1.36	6.80	56
Zimbabwe	1.60	5.20	9.60	-

From the above table, it is clear that mobile Internet /data tariffs in Zimbabwe are relatively cheaper and comparable to those obtaining within the SADC region.

POTRAZ would like to assure the nation of its commitment to continue enhancing data affordability for all citizens whilst at the same time ensuring operator viability. This is a delicate balance that requires concerted effort, including fiscal intervention to address declining disposable incomes. On its part, POTRAZ has endeavoured to balance service affordability and operator viability by ensuring that tariffs are cost based using scientifically accepted costing methodologies to determine the cost of providing services including mobile Internet/data. Resultantly, out-of mobile data tariff thresholds have reduced significantly over the past decade from USD0.18 per megabyte (USD180 per Gigabyte) in 2010, to the current USD0.0155 per megabyte (US\$15.50 per Gigabyte). Table 3 below shows the movement of out -of bundle data tariff thresholds approved by the Regulator inclusive of taxes in Zimbabwe from 2010 to date.


**Table 3: Out- of- Bundle Mobile Data Tariff Thresholds in USD (including all taxes)**

Effective date	Price per Megabyte (MB) in USD	Price per GB in USD
January 2010	0.18	180
January 2013	0.15	150
June 2018	0.064	64
January 2019	0.02	20
September 2020	0.0155	15.5
February 2021	0.0155	15.50

In conclusion, it is not true that Zimbabwe has the highest data tariffs of USD75.20 as portrayed by howmuch.net and the cable.co.uk website in their flawed study results of 2019. The highest price for Mobile data tariffs per Gigabyte in Zimbabwe was equivalent to USD20 in 2019. This has since reduced to USD15.50 since September 2020 to date.

We take this opportunity to urge our valued stakeholders to verify all information on Postal, Telecommunication and Courier Services with us before treating it as fact as some may be malicious and intended to induce panic.

**STAY SAFE FROM COVID 19. DO NOT BE STRESSED.**

  
 Dr. G.K. Machengete  
 POTRAZ Director General,  
 February 2021