Minister pleased with steps to cut communication costs

By Samuel Mungadze

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Communications Minister Yunus Carrim says he is "reasonably satisfied" with the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa's (Icasa) progress on reducing the cost to communicate since new mobile termination rates were introduced on 1 April.



Communications Minister, Yunus Carrim is pleased that communications costs in South Africa have dropped. Image: GCIS

Carrim met with Icasa's council last week to discuss progress on the broadband value chain analysis study, feedback on the mobile termination rates and regulatory measures required to implement "South Africa Connect", the country's broadband policy.

The minister urged mobile operators to co-operate with the regulator on reducing cost to communicate in the country. "We urge the mobile operators to co-operate with Icasa in providing the necessary information and in other ways to ensure that this process is finalised expeditiously," Carrim said.

Vodacom and MTN took legal action against the regulator over the new mobile termination rates, which were reduced by 50% to 20c in April. They challenged the procedure followed by Icasa in deciding the rates.

The Johannesburg High Court ruled in March that the regulator can implement the plan for six months while the decisions are reviewed.

"We received a report from Icasa on progress and are reasonably satisfied. They requested more resources from us and we agreed in principle to give them appropriate support," Carrim said.

He said the government "remains fully supportive of Icasa's work on lowering the cost to communicate, without, of course, interfering in its independence.

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