



## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

The Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) wishes to advise the public that, pursuant to section 6(1) of the Communications Act (Cap 68:01 of the Laws of Malawi), MACRA is mandated to regulate and monitor the provision of communications services and ensure that, as far as it is practicable, reliable communications services are provided throughout Malawi and are sufficient to meet the demand for such services in accordance with the principles of transparency, certainty, market orientation, efficiency, and consumer satisfaction.

MACRA has noted the growing concerns about fraudulent and unscrupulous ways in which mobile phones are being used, which are resulting in the loss of revenue for individuals and firms. Despite the numerous efforts that have been deployed to combat the situation, including public awareness, cases have continued to grow at unprecedented levels. To address the situation and enhance its ICT consumer protection mandate, MACRA is at an advanced stage of procuring an advanced ICT tool known as the Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR) System.

### **HOW THE CENTRAL EQUIPMENT IDENTITY REGISTER SYSTEM WORKS**

The CEIR will be connected to all Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) networks to enable comparisons of the International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) that is provided during handset registration against a set of three lists:

- Blacklist - Mobile Stations (MS) on this list will be denied access to any network.
- Whitelist - MSs on this list will be allowed access to any network.
- Grey - MSs on this list will be allowed on the network but may be tracked.

The main objective of the CEIR is to curtail mobile money fraud that has become rampant in Malawi, put to a stop the counterfeit mobile phone market, counter mobile phone theft, and protect ICT consumer interests. Counterfeit mobile phones are copies of popular brands and models of mobile phones which do not carry a valid and unique IMEI, and

they affect the quality of service to consumers as well as the traceability of the gadget. They can also pose health risks to the users as they have not been tested against safety standards and may emit a higher level of radiation than recommended. The implementation of the CEIR would resolve the following issues:

- i. minimize mobile money fraud by blocking both sim cards and handsets used in the fraud;
- ii. maintaining a centralized registry of all equipment identity facilitating database of all valid equipment;
- iii. protecting the interests of ICT consumers by making them aware of the information related to fake and cloned mobile equipment;
- iv. provision of an equipment registry service that will manage reported stolen mobile phones, reduce the presence of counterfeit devices in the Malawi market, combat various mobile fraud schemes and reduce illegal imports of devices into Malawi that evade taxes; and
- v. provision of a broader device detection analysis enabling the real-time detection of stolen devices.

CEIR is one of the most advanced tools used to combat fraudulent activities if the experiences of other ICT regulators in the region, such as Uganda and Tanzania, are anything to go by. MACRA appreciates concerted efforts deployed by various agencies in alleviating the situation and there is great optimism that CEIR will complement these efforts to ensure that there is a drastic reduction in mobile money fraud cases.

For any more information or clarification write [dg@macra.mw](mailto:dg@macra.mw)

**Dated this 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023**



**Daud Suleman**

**DIRECTOR GENERAL**