**PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO: 510**

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**DATE OF REPLY:**

Ms V van Dyk (DA) to ask the Minister of Telecommunications and Postal Services:

(1) (a) Which areas in each province have no cellphone reception and (b) which cellphone company has the biggest signal distribution in South Africa;

(2) (a) how does the delay in the roll-out of broadband affect the cellphone spectrum and (b) are cellphone companies dependent on the analogue spectrum made available through the roll-out of broadband;

(3) whether any plans have been put in place to ensure that the Kamiesberg and Richtersveld areas in Namaqualand in the Northern Cape, which currently have no cellphone reception, receive adequate cellphone reception signals so that the communities can also be connected; if not, why not; if so, (a) what are the relevant details and (b) by when will the specified areas receive adequate cellphone reception signals?

NW564E

**REPLY**

I have been advised by ICASA and the Department as follows:

(1)(a) ICASA does not have this information. We rely on map data provided by the operators as we do not have the resources to independently verify coverage of operators on a nationwide scale, although we can verify coverage in a specified location through measurement.

(b) The Authority has information regarding which operator has the largest coverage by the type of technology. However, this information has been submitted on a confidential basis therefore the Authority would have to request for permission to disclose it.

(2)(a)The roll-out of broadband does not affect the cell phone spectrum. Spectrum is an enabler for broadband roll out. It should however be noted the release of digital dividend spectrum after the migration from analogue to digital broadcasting will be critical in ensuring broadband rural deployments.

(b) Cell phone operators are dependent on spectrum to roll out broadband but not solely on analogue spectrum currently being held by broadcasters. The analogue spectrum will not be made available through the roll-out of broadband. It will be made available through digital switchover, a process of migrating analogue TV broadcasting to digital transmission, and analogue switch off, a process to complete switch-off of analogue TV services and freeing-up of spectrum. Thus, this spectrum would be available for broadband roll-out.

(3)(a) Both Kamiesberg and Richtersveld areas in Namaqualand in the Northern Cape were not monitored for the availability of Coverage. The Authority relies on the on coverage complaints it receives from the people in the area to conduct such monitoring.

(b) The areas of Namaqualand will be covered in the 2016/2017 financial year. It should be noted that Operators are not obligated to provide coverage in all areas as long as their total coverage remains within their licence conditions.