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MEDIA Questions from the DAILY MAVERICK: HUAWEI CYBER SECURITY

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Thu, May 21, 2020 at 5:30 PM

Dear Heidi,

I trust that you are well. Please see response to your questions as promised below:

1. In the light of the fact that South Africa does not have an equivalent to the UK's HCSEC, and given that Huawei equipment is used in core and non-core sections of South Africa's mobile networks, how can MTN assure the South African public that its networks (including current and future 5G networks) are not at an increased risk because of Huawei equipment?

MTN SA makes use of a number of network equipment providers and our voice and data mobile core is predominantly provided by Ericsson. MTN is aware of the potential issues and we conduct security assessments on an ongoing basis, both internally and through external security providers.

2. Does MTN work with the State Security Agency (SSA) to mitigate the risks of Huawei's equipment? If so, could you please provide details of how this is done (for instance: Does it take place on MTN premises, or at a separate premises? Does MTN invest any money in such efforts? Do you have joint cyber security teams with the SSA?)

From time to time, MTN engages with various law enforcement agencies including the State Security Agency. Due to the sensitive nature of the requests, we are not at liberty to disclose the extent of these engagements.

3. Is MTN at all planning on lobbying Huawei to establish an independent, transparent evaluation centre similar to the UK's HCSEC in South Africa? If so, is it possible to provide any detail, such as when it will be opened, or how it will be funded? If not, can you provide reasons?

MTN operates across markets in Africa and the Middle East. We are not lobbying the governments in these countries of operation to set up an entities to assess the security of networking equipment providers. MTN supports the principles of transparency and the establishment of independent security assessment bodies where relevant. MTN is part of a number of bodies including the GSMA and the Trustworthiness & Software Engineering Capability Transformation (TSECT) Technical Working Group (TG), that includes other Telcos from Europe, UK, Middle East as well as key security figures in Academia. This forum is reviewing and providing input into the processes that Huawei has implemented in their secure development practices.

4. Do you use Huawei-manufactured interception equipment? If so, how do you mediate associated risks? Do you use ZTE - manufactured lawful interception equipment? If so, how do you mediate associated risks? If you use neither of these brands, which brand do you use?

MTN does not procure interception equipment.

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