

# Call to share mobile phone infrastructure

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The Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Postal and Courier Services has called for a strong policy on infrastructure sharing by all mobile phone companies in the country.



Chairman for the Portfolio Committee on ICT Postal and Courier Services Nelson Chamisa said the sharing of infrastructure ensured that capital was used efficiently by the mobile phone companies.

Chamisa was presenting a report in the National Assembly at Parliament on the state of the country's mobile phone sector.

Image via [123RF](#)

"There is need to enforce mandatory infrastructure sharing so that exclusivity is avoided. Government must have a role in the financing of infrastructure in order to reduce costs to the consumer and provide incentives for investment in supporting infrastructure," said Chamisa.

He said the country's mobile sector had made a significant contribution towards the development of infrastructure.

"This has seen the emergence of new access roads in underdeveloped areas. The construction and maintenance of infrastructure has also provided employment to local communities," he said.

He said the country had the most expensive tariffs of voice calls and called for a reduction in charges by the mobile phone operators. Chamisa also called for the speedy construction of more community information centres in the country.

He urged Government to recapitalise NetOne as it had been unable to meet its capital expenditure requirements and foreign debt redemption.

"The committee recommends that Government chips in to capitalise NetOne or they would have to find a new partner as the mobile network is under-capitalised, hence it has not been able to meet its capital expenditure requirements and foreign debt redemption," said Chamisa.

Chamisa commended NetOne, Econet and Telecel for providing services, which saw a decline in the country's ICT illiteracy rate as people now had Internet access and could make mobile payments from their mobile phones.

"The country's network coverage is 75 percent and Internet penetration stands at 42 percent, a figure that is above most African countries," said Chamisa.

Chamisa also commended the three mobile networks for introducing mobile payment systems, which have made banking accessible at grassroots level.