

Press Statement

06 March 2025

About us

The Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS) International, Lusaka is an NGO that was established in 2000 to function as a center for research, advocacy and networking on issues of trade and development, economic governance and consumer welfare.

The mission of the center is to function as a resource, coordination, as well as networking center, to promote South-South cooperation on trade and development by involving state and non-state actors (NSAs).

For further information please contact: The Director, Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS), House No 32, Plot 407, Kudu Road, Kabulonga, Lusaka. Email: lusaka@cuts.org or phone: 0957944739.

This press statement has been made available to you by:

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MultiChoice subscription fee hike a concern

Why it is important for consumers?

The MultiChoice subscription fee hike raises consumer concerns amid economic hardships, load shedding, and dissatisfaction with content quality. Many households struggle to afford entertainment, and power outages limit access to services. Consumers are also seeking alternative platforms for better content. MultiChoice should improve content, offer flexible payment options, and consider affordability.

Statement

The recent decision by MultiChoice to increase subscription fees is an issue of concern especially amid prevailing economic hardships. The move comes at a time when many households are grappling with the high cost of living, frequent load shedding, and declining content quality.

Consumer Struggles

Rising prices of essential goods such as food, fuel, and electricity have already placed significant strain on household budgets. The subscription fee hike further worsens the burden, making it difficult for consumers to afford entertainment services. Additionally, frequent power outages limit consumers' ability to fully utilize the service, raising questions about the fairness of the price adjustment. Subscribers have also expressed dissatisfaction with repetitive and outdated content, arguing that the fee increase should be accompanied by improved content offerings.

Business Justification

On the other hand, MultiChoice may justify the increment by citing rising operational costs, including content licensing fees inflation, and investments in local and international programming.



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The company also offers exclusive live sports coverage and streaming options that provide added value.

However, some consumers believe that the company has been affected by a decline in subscriptions due to prolonged load shedding. This is evidenced by follow-up calls from MultiChoice agents inquiring about customer challenges and encouraging subscribers to use alternative devices like tablets and smartphones in view of loadshedding. While this option provides some flexibility, these gadgets still require electricity for charging—rendering the solution impractical during power outages.

Is the Increase Justifiable?

Increasing subscription fees may lead to further customer losses for MultiChoice, as many consumers turn to Netflix for the latest movies and documentaries. From a consumer rights perspective, the increment is not entirely justifiable unless MultiChoice takes steps to improve service delivery and content quality. One possible solution could be introducing a pay-per-view model that allows consumers to pay only for the content they watch—a model that has proven successful in countries like South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya.

Additionally, offering discounted packages during periods of load shedding or bundling services with affordable data packages could encourage customer retention without compromising consumer welfare.

In light of these challenges, MultiChoice is encouraged to explore innovative solutions to retain customers rather than relying solely on price hikes, which may further alienate struggling consumers



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