



Media Statement

For Immediate Release

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COMMISSION PROSECUTES DIAGNOSTIC MEDICAL IMAGING EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS

The Competition Commission ("Commission") has referred GE South Africa (Pty) Ltd and GE Medical Systems South Africa (Pty) Ltd, Siemens Healthcare (Pty) Ltd and Philips South Africa Commercial (Pty) Ltd (collectively, "the respondents") to the Competition Tribunal ("Tribunal") for prosecution over alleged anticompetitive conduct in the servicing, repair and maintenance of diagnostic medical imaging equipment.

The respondents operate nationwide, supplying and servicing diagnostic medical imaging ("DMI") equipment, including X-ray, ultrasound, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT) scanners and PET/CT systems. This equipment is essential diagnostic infrastructure, enabling South Africa's healthcare practitioners to see inside the body, detect and monitor diseases, make accurate diagnoses, plan appropriate treatment and, in some cases, prevent disease.

Reliable DMI equipment is particularly important in South Africa, where healthcare providers must respond to the overlapping burden of cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and hypertension, alongside HIV and tuberculosis. When this equipment is unavailable, delays in diagnosis can postpone treatment and worsen patient outcomes. The impact is especially severe in public and rural facilities, where prolonged downtime and limited access to service providers may leave hospitals unable to diagnose and treat patients timeously. Because DMI systems cost millions of rand and typically remain in service for 10 to 15 years, timely access to software updates, spare parts, preventive maintenance and repairs is essential to extend their operational life, contain healthcare costs and maintain continuity of care. Access to functioning DMI equipment is therefore directly linked to the affordability and accessibility of healthcare, and to patients' Constitutional right of access to healthcare services.

The Commission's investigation revealed allegations that the respondents denied or restricted independent clinical engineers access to the spare parts, diagnostic software, service keys, technical information and specialised training required to compete effectively with the respondents in the DMI servicing, repair and maintenance aftermarket.

The Commission alleges that this conduct contravenes section 8(1)(c), alternatively section 8(1)(d)(ii), of the Competition Act 89 of 1998, as amended ("the Act"). The alleged restrictions limit competition in the

aftermarket for servicing and repairs, contributing to higher costs and fewer repair options for healthcare facilities.

The Tribunal will determine whether the respondents' conduct contravened the Act and, if so, impose appropriate remedies.

[ENDS]

Issued by:

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