

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Unlicensed White Space Device Operations in the Television Bands*, ET Docket No. 20-36.

A couple of bumpy hours outside of Nairobi, Kenya, sits a small market town called Embu. That's where I met Paul—a young man selling rice, beans, and other dry goods out of a packed market stall. Embu runs along the foothills of Mt. Kenya, and like many remote parts of the world, it had been stuck on the wrong side of the digital divide for far too long. That only made it harder for Paul to maintain his business and earn some money. But that changed a few weeks before we met. That's when a fixed wireless provider, Mawingu Networks, worked with Microsoft to bring Internet service to the area using unlicensed TV white spaces.

Paul is an entrepreneur at heart, so he immediately seized the opportunity to use the white space technology to expand his business. He started accepting mobile payments, which were safer and more reliable than cash; he was selling airtime on the network; and he was even tweeting out marketing pitches. That was one year ago.

I reconnected with Paul online this week. I mentioned that I wanted to tell his story at our FCC meeting. He said I want you to let people know how an Internet connection is changing my life. He now gets 50 customers per day that pay through mobile payments, and the number is increasing every month. And it was clear from our conversation that it was not just his life that benefited from a connection. His shop is now a hotspot that lets other people get online. And a few months ago, he introduced M-Pesa—a mobile money transfer service—which allows customers to withdraw cash at his shop and then purchase goods from other merchants and small businesses in the market.

Paul's story is an example of the power of connectivity. He started out selling dry goods in a market stall with a drive to do even more. Now he runs an Internet-powered mobile payment business that provides his entire community with a safe and accessible place to deposit and withdraw money.

The combination of broad, low-band coverage and affordable white spaces devices helped bring this opportunity to Embu.

And that is precisely why it is so important that we expand opportunities for white space devices in this country. We can make even more progress towards closing the digital divide while empowering rural communities through high-speed connections. A big reason we are here today is because stakeholders got together, compromised, and identified a path forward. So I want to commend them for their work, and I look forward to reviewing the feedback on these proposals.

I want to thank the Office of Engineering and Technology for its work on the item. It has my support.