

## GovChat Statement on Competition Commission referring Facebook for Prosecution

GovChat welcomes the Competition Commission statement made on 14 March 2022. The Commission announced that it has referred, Meta Platforms Inc (previously known as Facebook Inc), and its subsidiaries, WhatsApp Inc and Facebook South Africa (collectively referred to as Facebook) for abuse of dominance to the Competition Tribunal for prosecution.

The matter is groundbreaking, being one of the few abuse of dominance cases ever to be prosecuted by the South African Competition Commission, and the first of its kind involving digital platforms and marketplaces. The case echoes the US DoJ Antitrust Division's recent case filed against Meta for; "its strategies to eliminate emerging startups that rely on Meta platforms and ecosystem to offer and innovate upon their services, before they are able to become a threat to Meta's dominance".

GovChat CEO, Eldrid Jordaan stated that; "This sets a precedent for South African startups to continue on their mission, regardless of the headwinds."

We are grateful for the opportunity to continue to serve the nearly, 9 million citizens, and residents who use GovChat as their point of engagement, and touch point. GovChat thus far has created a platform which:

- enables Citizens, and residents to digitally access social services, including the processing of 13 million Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant applications,
- in partnership with the Department of Health and other private sector partners, provides 7 million citizens, and all who have tested for COVID-19 a secure and reliable way of receiving their test results on their devices, regardless of whether they tested at a public or private healthcare facility;
- Along with our partners in Government and Civil Society, provides a safe reporting feature for gender based violence, and;
- enables citizens/residents to connect with their municipalities and service delivery points for an accountable and responsive local government.



We are grateful to our partners, namely; the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), the Department of Social Development (DSD), the Department of Cooperative Governance, as well as the continued support of the United Nations in South Africa and UNICEF.

We hope that the 10% fine which Meta faces will act as the deterrent to big tech from acting in a way that stifles startups, innovation, and competition.

We are thankful to be able to continue to serve the millions of people who have come to rely on GovChat, as well as government at various levels in their use of the data analytics to address citizens, and residents' needs.

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