

# SAMENA TRENDS

EXCLUSIVELY TO SAMENA TELECOMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL'S MEMBERS

BUILDING DIGITAL ECONOMIES

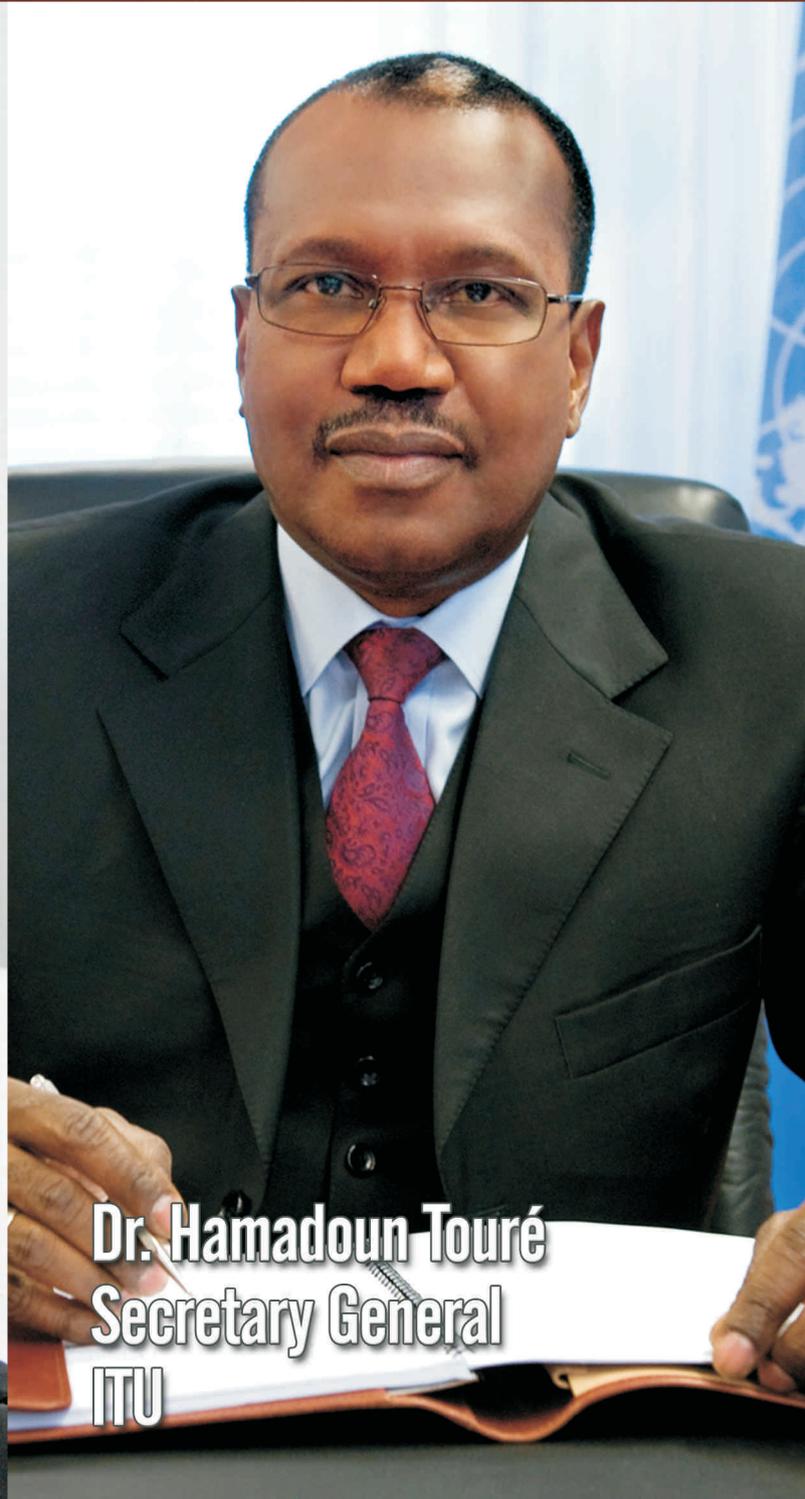
A SAMENA Telecommunications Council Newsletter

Volume 03  
Issue 02  
February 2012

## Connect The Unconnected



**Dr. Hessa Sultan Al Jaber**  
**Secretary General**  
**ictQATAR**



**Dr. Hamadoun Touré**  
**Secretary General**  
**ITU**

# Welcome to SAMENA careers

Find the best talent by  
Job Classification, Job Type & Location  
in South Asia, The Middle East & North Africa

## Announcing the easiest and most economical method to recruit your next rising star

- ▶ An automated market employment assistance service tool.
- ▶ Latest electronic commerce technologies coupled with the human interface of SAMENA and its vast contact database.
- ▶ Allows human resource management to research, compile and reach out to aspiring job seekers in a highly focused and user definable fashion.
- ▶ Easy to use, user friendly, automated and manual search either by employer or job reference basis.

Be part of the SAMENA Careers Portal!

*Just fill out the application & enter the world of  
automated market employment!!!*



For Support & inquiries

+971.4.364.2700

info@samenacareers.com

www.samenacareers.com

careers

# EDITORIAL



Dubai, UAE Spring is near and a visit to Doha is soon upon many of us here at SAMENA HQ. There are opportunities abundant and one of the most recent ones is the ability for SAMENA to work with the Connect Arab Summit 2012, which will be hosted by the ITU and ICT Qatar, along with the League of Arab States. The SAMENA region has certainly been very much active over the past few years, however this year, it seems highly likely that the Middle East will be even more active this year. The environment for change has never been stronger regarding policy and related activities.

We are excited to be a part of the process in bringing "Connect Arab Summit" to the private sector. This year, the ITU has been very active in reaching out to the private sector and SAMENA is prepared to assist in this endeavor on an active basis. The Summit will encapsulate an opening debate and then five important round table discussions bringing thought provoking discussion to subject matter of high relevance to the region and beyond, including harnessing the power of ICTs to boost job creation, dismantling barriers to the creation of a thriving entrepreneurial Arab ICT industry, the harmonization of policies to attract investment, building upon international cooperation, creating a cyber security with confidence, building and creating local content and the power of thought, as well as fostering and developing an environment that can produce a new locally oriented digital value chain, specifically tailored toward the youth of the region.

The population base of the region and the distinct culture that comes along with that thriving population brings huge opportunity that must be harnessed and developed through a long term development plan. ICT starts the process, with the new digital economy coming forth on a global basis. We are working with all different elements toward this thinking and the industry is a leader in this environment. We are proud to be a part of the "Connect Arab Summit 2012" and welcome you to Doha on March 5-7, 2012.

In closing, we are truly looking for a very active year, in the region. SAMENA is highly active in areas of interest such as the Digital Dividend, Internet Governance, Broadband Infrastructure Policy and other specific areas of interest. Over the past month, our team and membership have been all over the world discussing and participating in dialogue with all stakeholders regarding these all important issues. SAMENA is also developing a new front page to its web site and soon will be rolling out an issues oriented visual virtual environment that will be much easier to navigate and take you to the areas of interest most important to you. In addition, the organization is also ensuring that BYC in Muscat carriers forward the Broadband platform to the region and beyond, along with preparing for its annual Leadership Dinner meeting, which will be held in Hong Kong, thanks to KHT for hosting the prestigious event.

We are enjoying the weather while it remains and look forward to seeing you in Doha and in Muscat in the forceable future.

Truly Yours,

**Thomas Wilson**  
CEO & Managing Director  
SAMENA Telecommunications Council



SAMENA TRENDS® newsletter is wholly owned and operated by SAMENA Telecommunications Council FZ, LLC (SAMENA). Information in the newsletter is not intended as professional services advice, and SAMENA disclaims any liability for use of specific information or results thereof. Articles and information contained in this publication are the copyright of SAMENA Telecommunications Council, (unless otherwise noted, described or stated) and cannot be reproduced, copied or printed in any form without the express written permission of the publisher.

SAMENA does not necessarily endorse, support, sanction, encourage, verify or agree with the content, comments, opinions or statements made in SAMENA TRENDS by any entity or entities. Information, products and services offered, sold or placed in the newsletter by other than SAMENA belong to the respective entity or entities and are not representative of SAMENA. SAMENA hereby expressly disclaims any and all warranties, expressed and implied, including but not limited to any warranties of accuracy, reliability, merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose by any entity or entities offering information, products and services in this newsletter. The user agrees that SAMENA is not responsible, and shall have no liability to such user, with respect to any information, product or service offered by any entity or entities in this newsletter. SAMENA's only liability in the event of errors shall be the correction or removal of the erroneous information after verification.

**Editor in Chief**  
Thomas Wilson

**Managing Editor**  
Bocar A. BA

**Contributing Editors**  
Javaid Akhtar Malik

**Member Contributing**  
Devoteam  
Peppers & Rogers Group

**Publisher**  
SAMENA Telecommunications Council

**Subscriptions**  
subscriptions@samenacouncil.org

**Advertising**  
ads@samenacouncil.org

**For any legal issues or concerns,**  
e-mail: legal@samenacouncil.org

Or Contact SAMENA at: **SAMENA TRENDS**  
Alfa Building-Rm. 304, Knowledge Village  
PO Box: 502544, Dubai, United Arab Emirates  
Tel: +971.4.364.2700

# CONTENTS

## 1 EDITORIAL

## 3 NEWS

- Top Regional & Member News

## 5 EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

- **Dr. Hamadoun Touré**  
Secretary General  
ITU
- **Dr. Hessa Sultan Al Jaber**  
Secretary General  
ictQATAR

## 14 DISCUSSION

- Internet Governance and the Future of Internet

## 16 REGIONAL PERFORMANCE

- SAMENA Region Cellular Penetration vs. Subscriber Base
- Regional vs. Global Ranking wrt Penetration
- SAMENA vs. Global Ranking wrt Subscriber Base

## 18 REGULATORY

- Regulatory News
- A Snapshot of Regulatory Activities in SAMENA Region
- Recent Policy & Regulatory Developments
- Regulatory Activities Beyond the SAMENA Region

## 32 TECHNOLOGY

- National Broadband Network Development  
Broadband: the Enabler of
- Societal Development & Economic Growth
- Broadband: The Enabler of  
Societal Development & Economic Growth

## 41 SATELLITE

- Satellite News

## 43 ROAMING SECTION

- Roaming News

## EDITORIAL





## TOP REGIONAL & MEMBER NEWS

### Umniah Launches Microsoft Applications and Internet Services in Jordan

Umniah launched its Umniahlive.net service for the first time in Jordan, enabling subscribers to consolidate data and efficiently manage their emails and online activities, as well as access other services and free applications. The free-of-charge services provide Umniah subscribers with value-added- features that enable them to create email accounts that are linked to their personal mobile numbers, allowing them to efficiently exchange email addresses and consolidate contact information. These services can be accessed both online and offline, offering subscribers an unparalleled and highly efficient experience. The service, which is password-protected, offers 25GB of online storage, allowing users to share files, upload and share videos and create, read and edit various documents, simply by dragging them from the desktop and dropping them onto their Internet browsers. Umniahlive.net services, along with a number of Microsoft applications and Internet services are provided by virtue of Umniah's strategic partnership agreement with Microsoft Jordan.

### MTN Confirms New Smartphone Data Bundle Pricing

MTN is set to launch BlackBerry type Internet data bundles for a wide range of smartphones. MTN will launch new smartphone data packages, similar to the popular BlackBerry Internet Service (BIS) offerings, starting from US\$3.26 (R25) per month. MTN said that the following Smartphone Services will be available for purchase. Nokia Smartphone Pro Service US\$6.39 ((R49) per month) : 75MB fair use on Nokia Smartphones to access the Nokia Ovi ecosystem (Nokia Messaging, Chat, Navigation and Ovi store). MTN Smartphone Pro Service US\$ 6.39((R49) per month): 75MB fair use on any Smartphone for e-mail, Instant Messaging and Navigation. Other internet usage will also deplete the fair use allowance. MTN Social Networking Service US\$3.78((R29) per month): 75MB fair use to access Facebook & MXit (m.facebook.com & m.mxit.com) on any Smartphone, any other social networks will be charged for. MTN Opera Mini Internet Service US\$4.56 ((R35) per month): 75MB fair use on any Smartphone to access the internet using the MTN Branded Opera Mini browser. Customers need to ensure that they have the MTN Branded Opera Mini browser installed on their device.

## Qualcomm Makes Voice Call over LTE for the First Time

Qualcomm has successfully tried handling a voice call over an LTE mobile network for the first time ever. Though major network providers like Verizon and AT&T have already rolled out their LTE networks, they are still making use of 3G networks to carry out the voice calls between the users. Qualcomm's present achievement is notable since it takes the world of communications close to making VoLTE technology a reality, as far as day to day use of LTE networks are concerned. The company claims to have tasted success in making out a voice call using a test hardware powered by Snapdragon S4 MSM8960 3G, LTE multimode processor on December 23, last year. They crossed the milestone while working with Ericsson. Qualcomm claims that they were able to hand over the voice call from an LTE network to a WCDMA network. The operation was made with the help of Single Radio Voice Call Continuity technology otherwise known as SRVCC. SRVCC is very crucial in bringing voice handling on LTE networks possible, by providing continuity of service. It continuously switches to a WCDMA network, when the user making a call on VoLTE leaves the LTE coverage.

## Mobily Launches the New "Premium" and "Plus" Blackberry Packages

Etiad Etisalat Mobily revealed its latest packages for Blackberry service, the new "Premium" and "Plus" packages; dedicated to its new and existing subscribers whether postpaid or prepaid, and for a fixed monthly fees with great benefits, and for a limited period. Customers can subscribe to the new packages by sending a SMS to Mobily. Mobily urged prepaid subscribers to make sure they have enough credit first before subscribing to any of the new packages; where minimum of US\$ 26.39(99 SAR) is required for subscribing to the "Premium" package and US\$ 21.06 (79 SAR) is required for subscribing to the "Plus" package, whereas for postpaid subscribers, The Premium package offers subscribers a monthly allowance of 150 minutes and unlimited on-net SMS, 1 GB internet browsing and 5 MB for roaming internet, for a fixed monthly fee of~ US\$ 26.39(99 SAR). Subscribers to the Plus package receive a monthly allowance of 1 GB for domestic internet browsing and 5 MB for US\$ 21.06 (79 SAR). Mobily was the first telecom company in the kingdom to offer the blackberry service to its subscribers.

## Batelco Launches "Broadband for All" Scheme

Batelco has launched new pre-paid fixed broadband options under the banner 'broadband for all'. Broadband for All is available through all Batelco's consumer fixed line connections. Batelco is now delivering its high speed Broadband service at speeds of up to 1Mbps for as low as BD2. Currently, Batelco is offering two prepaid card denominations US\$ 5.3 (BHD2) with usage of 1GB valid for a 24-hour period and US\$ 10.6 (BHD4) with usage of 2GB valid for 7 days. Customers need a Batelco fixed line and any ADSL router to start using the service with a Broadband for all prepaid card. The Broadband for All prepaid cards are available at all Batelco Retail Shops and from Batelco's third party distributors which are located all over the kingdom. The telco intends to expand the range of pre-paid options in the near future. Batelco general manager media relations said Batelco's investment in its next generation network enables the company to deliver this innovative service to its customers.

## Ufone MyTunes: Personalized Ringtones for the Caller!

Ufone has once again positioned itself as a market leader in innovation and unique ideas. Ufone has launched MyTunes service, one of the most promising value added service in the industry. For the first time in Pakistan, Ufone users will have the exclusive option to listen to the songs of their choice once they call on any number. Officially known as MyTunes the caller gets to hear the tune that he sets for himself, instead of listening to the conventional ring-tone, or caller tunes set by the person they are making a call to. Users can dial 666 and select MyTunes from Urdu and English melodies. Chief marketing officer at Ufone said that it was important to understand the changing requirements of the customers and work towards developing such services and propositions which cater to the evolving needs of Ufone subscriber base. He also said that with this attractive service, call-making will become more enjoyable and fun. To subscribe to this offer users can dial 666



Dr Hamadoun Touré, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) since January 2007, was re-elected for a second four-year term in October 2010.

As Secretary-General, Dr Touré is committed to ITU's mission of connecting the world, and to helping achieve the Millennium Development Goals through harnessing the unique potential of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

A long-standing champion of ICTs as a driver of social and economic development, Dr Touré previously served as Director of ITU's Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) from 1998-2006. In this role he placed considerable emphasis on implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), launching projects based on partnerships with international organizations, governments, the private sector and civil society.

Dr Touré started his professional career in his native Mali in 1979. He built a solid career in the satellite industry, serving as managing engineer in Mali's first International Earth Station. He joined Intelsat's Assistance and Development Programme in 1985. He was appointed Intelsat's Group Director for Africa and the Middle East in 1994, earning a reputation as an energetic leader through his commitment to various regional connectivity projects such as RASCOM. In 1996 he joined ICO Global Communications as African Regional General Manager, spearheading the companies' activities across the African region.

A national of Mali, Dr Touré holds a Masters Degree in Electrical Engineering from the Technical Institute of Electronics and Telecommunications of Leningrad, and a PhD from the University of Electronics, Telecommunications and Informatics of Moscow. He is married with four children and two grandchildren, and is proficient in four official ITU languages: English, French, Russian and Spanish.



**Dr. Hamadoun Touré**  
Secretary General  
ITU

**Q. The Arab region has made extraordinary progress in mobile connectivity. What are the next challenges?**

**A.** There's no doubt that right across the region, the technology of choice is mobile. ITU statistics show that, between 2006 and 2011, the number of mobile cellular subscriptions in the Arab States soared from 126 million to almost 350 million. This represents nearly 97 subscriptions for every 100 people, ahead of the world average penetration rate of some 87 per cent. The challenge now, of course, is to do for the Internet and broadband what we have so successfully achieved with mobile.

Fixed-broadband Internet subscriptions remain limited in the Arab States, with only 2.2 connections per 100 inhabitants, compared to the world average of 8.5 per cent. It's worth remembering that this does equate to eight million fixed broadband subscriptions, massively up from one million in 2006 – so we have made good progress. But there's still far to go.

To address this challenge, the ITU has been working with governments and other partners on a wide range of initiatives to improve the global accessibility of broadband ICT infrastructure and services, and to decrease the cost of such access. One of the most important of these has been the launch in 2010 of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development, which is co-chaired by President Kagame of Rwanda and Carlos Slim of Mexico, with myself and the Director-General of UNESCO serving as co-vice-chairs.

At the most recent meeting of the Commission in Geneva in October 2011, just ahead of ITU's Broadband Leadership Summit, the Commission announced a set of four new targets that countries around the world should strive to meet in order to ensure their populations fully participate in tomorrow's emerging Knowledge Societies.

**The new targets cover broadband policy, affordability and uptake:**

1. Making broadband policy universal. By 2015, all countries should have a national broadband plan or strategy or include broadband in their Universal Access / Service Definitions.
2. Making broadband affordable. By 2015, the cost of entry-level broadband services should amount to less than 5% of average monthly income.
3. Connecting homes to broadband. By 2015, 40% of households in developing countries should have Internet access.
4. Getting people online. By 2015, Internet user penetration should reach 60% worldwide, 50% in Developing countries and 15% in Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

I believe these targets are ambitious but achievable, given the political will and commitment on the part of governments, working in partnership with the private sector. ITU will undertake responsibility for measuring each country's progress towards the targets, producing an annual broadband report with rankings of nations worldwide in terms of broadband policy, affordability and uptake.

The Commission also endorsed a 'Broadband Challenge' which recognizes communication as 'a human need and a right', and calls on governments and private industry to work together to develop the innovative policy frameworks, business models and financing arrangements needed to facilitate growth in access to broadband worldwide.

**Q. How do you look at the role of digital dividend in overcoming the digital divide, particularly in terms of broadband?**

**A.** The digital dividend opens up many opportunities to use the freed spectrum for other services or applications. It can be used by broadcasting services – for example, to cover provision of more programmes, high definition or 3D TV, or mobile television. It can also be used by other types of services in a frequency band which could be shared with broadcasting (for example, short-range devices, such as wireless microphones used in theatres or during public events). And it could also be used in a distinct, harmonized frequency allocation for cellphones enabling ubiquitous service provision, universally compatible equipment and international roaming.

A harmonized approach is required to release UHF spectrum internationally (particularly if it is to be used for mobile service), to ensure a wide availability of devices at reasonable cost. Further harmonized mobile spectrum in the UHF frequency range is foreseen for IMT networks, and also to fulfill the future spectrum requirements for specialist users such as public safety providers.

Providing sufficient spectrum to support the growth of mobile broadband services is clearly a major priority, because broadband is such a powerful enabler, and because mobile access will continue to dominate as the platform of choice in a great many countries worldwide. Broadband has the potential to massively expand the effective delivery of vital services such as healthcare and education, to geographically distributed populations which could never be properly served by traditional, centralized models.

Expanded access to ICTs is already bringing services such as mobile banking to tens of millions of people in the developing world, giving them the kind of financial power to manage their lives which they have never before had.

Access to mobile networks is now available to 90% of the world population and 80% of the population living in rural areas.

More people are now moving from 2G to 3G platforms, in both developed and developing countries. More than 140 countries are offering 3G services, compared to just 95 countries three years ago. However, the majority of countries that have not yet launched 3G services are in Africa and the Arab States. In addition, to encourage more people to get online we also need to ensure the availability of relevant content in local languages.

### Q. How do you look at the ICTs as a driver of social and economic development?

A. People in the poorest countries are now benefiting enormously from the mobile cellular miracle. As we all know, ICTs are essential in helping us accelerate progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. This was clearly recognized by the World Summit for the Information Society in 2005, and by the LDC 4 conference in Istanbul last year. In 2001, the LDC 3 conference's Brussels Programme of Action called for average telephone density in LDCs to be increased to five main lines per 100 inhabitants, and for Internet connections to be increased to ten users per 100 inhabitants.

Let me put these targets into context. At the time of LDC 3, the combined average teledensity – fixed plus mobile – in LDCs had reached 1.17%. As a contrast, combined teledensity across all developing countries – including powerhouses such as China – had reached almost 17%.

At the same time, in LDCs there were just three Internet users for every 1,000 inhabitants. The developing country average was almost ten times higher, at 28 users per 1,000 inhabitants.

#### Where are we today, ten years later?

By the beginning of last year, average mobile cellular teledensity in LDCs had already surpassed 25%, and was continuing to grow fast.

The percentage of Internet users in LDCs – at 2.5% - is also encouraging, even if more progress needs to be made.

People ask if low Internet penetration really such a high priority, when people in LDCs face a daily lack of safe drinking water, rising food prices, and a chronic shortage of healthcare?

My answer is a resounding yes. Because technology really does have the power to radically transform lives. Particularly in the developing world, and particularly in countries with large rural and remote populations.

### Q. Please tell us about some of the ITU's key projects and its collaboration and partnerships with international organizations, governments, the private sector and civil society?

A. The ITU has a very long tradition of implementing projects in the area of ICT for Development, and collaborates with a wide variety of stakeholders and funding partners, including government ministries, NGOs, financial institutions and pan-governmental bodies like the European Commission and the League of Arab States.

During ITU's World Telecommunication Development Conference in Hyderabad (2010), a broad framework of priority areas for development to be addressed within each of the six ITU regions – Americas, CIS, Asia-Pacific, Arab Region, Africa and Europe – were adopted as Regional Initiatives. For the Arab States, the following five Regional Initiatives were adopted:

- ◆ Broadband access network
- ◆ Digital broadcasting
- ◆ Open-source software
- ◆ Arabic digital content
- ◆ Cyber security

#### Examples of recent and ongoing projects include:

##### Establishment of Harmonized Policies for the ICT Market in the ACP

Targeting countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, this project is being carried out with funding from ITU and the European Commission, and aims at developing and promoting harmonized policies and guidelines for the ICT market as well as building human and institutional capacity in the field of ICT through a range of targeted training, education programs and knowledge sharing measures.

##### ITU Wireless Broadband Initiative

ITU launched the Wireless Broadband Initiative to support wireless broadband connectivity and ICT applications development all over the world. Particular focus is on selected public institutions in capitals and major cities (such as schools, municipalities, hospitals) and for under served populations in rural and remote areas in least developed and developing countries. ITU has been implementing several wireless broadband connectivity projects on a regional basis, and now is looking for partners to extend these projects to a global level and to achieve the aim of connecting the world. The Susan & Craig Mc Caw Foundation is the key partner of ITU in the implementation of this first phase, covering six countries (Burundi, Djibouti, Mali, Burkina Faso and Rwanda).

##### ITU-Luxembourg telecommunications for disaster response

ITU and the Government of the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg are cooperating on strengthening emergency telecommunications and rapid response in the event of natural disasters. The Government of Luxembourg has developed a nomadic satellite-based telecommunication system – ‘emergency.lu’ – aimed at assisting humanitarian agencies respond to communities affected by natural disasters, conflicts or protracted crises. This platform is available as a global public good to the international humanitarian community, with Luxembourg funding its development, implementation, operation and

#### **ITU-Anatel Cooperation Project**

ITU has partnered with Brazilian regulator Anatel to help the agency create a new Cost Model that will assist in setting tariffs for fixed telephony and calculating industry standard reference values for mobile and leased line services. The new Cost Model will provide access to information management costs of the different business areas and product lines of telecommunications service providers, and improve the overall regulation of the sector. The cost model represents a key element in helping Anatel ensure compliance with Brazil's public sector policies.



maintenance. Under the umbrella of the ‘ITU Framework for Cooperation in Emergencies’ (IFCE), ITU will encourage its 193 Member States to use the ‘emergency.lu’ platform and facilitate the rapid deployment of emergency telecommunication systems in the event of a sudden-onset disaster, or a longer-term deployment in chronic or recurrent humanitarian contexts or as part of a preparedness strategy in developing countries.

#### **ITU-Australian government projects for supporting Asia-Pacific regional initiatives**

The projects funded by the Australian Government (Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy) and implemented by ITU have focused on ICT development areas ranging from policy and regulatory matters to technologies and infrastructure development, as well as human capacity building. They have created significant impact in the enabling environment in various countries especially LDCs and SIDS.

**Q. What else is ITU doing to contribute towards achieving its goal of connecting the world?**

**A.** In order to ensure countries are properly skilled and prepared for broadband network installation and management, capacity building will also be hugely important. ICT is the economic sector that continues to generate the majority of the new jobs worldwide, and countries must ensure they are well-positioned to harness new opportunities by creating a strong ICT skill base, especially among young people. Skills development has long been a key ITU priority, spanning a wide range of different training and education initiatives designed to build capacity across all social strata.

Our Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) is now streamlining its extensive ICT training efforts through its ITU Academy initiative. The vision of ITU Academy is to

strengthen the human, institutional and organizational capacity of developing countries by making available ICT learning and development opportunities at the highest possible levels of quality.

Supporting the ITU Academy initiative are a number of front-line training partners including the ITU's Centres of Excellence and Internet Training Centres — all key players in delivering education, training and information in the different world regions.

To date, ITU has contributed more than US\$10 million in seed funding to help set up over 60 Centres of Excellence in regions around the world. These offer continuous education to senior ICT managers in the public and private spheres through face-to-face or distance learning programmes. They also serve as regional focal points for professional development, research, and knowledge sharing, and specialist training services for external clients.

Complementing the Centres of Excellence, our Internet Training Centres initiative is helping developing countries build their own pool of 'new economy' professionals who will drive ongoing ICT growth at a local level. ITU has so far helped establish some 80 ITCs in over 60 nations, many of which are UN-designated Least Developed Countries.

**Q. Net neutrality is currently one of the vital issues that are being discussed around the world in different countries. Please share your thoughts on this, and how do you look at net neutrality in the near future?**

**A.** The important issue of net neutrality was addressed by ITU's Global Symposium for Regulators in both 2009 and 2010. The regulators participating in these GSR adopted the following best practice guidelines:

- ◆ Regulators may consider developing adequate provisions both in the fixed and the mobile Internet access services to ensure network neutrality.
- ◆ With regard to Internet traffic management, only objectively justifiable differentiations be made in the way in which various data streams are treated, whether according to the type of content, the service, application, device or the address of the stream's origin or destination.
- ◆ When Internet Service Providers (ISPs) do employ traffic management mechanisms for ensuring access to the Internet at any point of the network, they comply with the general principles of relevance, proportionality, efficiency, non-discrimination between parties and transparency.

In addition, ITU believes that to ensure reasonable traffic management practices, regulators should take measures such as:-

- ◆ Considering implementing measures for ISPs to disclose information concerning network management, quality of service and other practices as is reasonably required for subscribers and content, application, and service providers-
- ◆ Allowing clients to quickly end their contracts without high switching costs -
- ◆ Allowing clients to prescribe minimum quality of service for Internet access.
- ◆ Creating policy directives stating the rights of consumers to access any lawful content, applications, and services over their Internet connections.

As this remains a vital issue being discussed worldwide, net neutrality will again be one of the topics to be addressed by the next GSR, to be held in Sri Lanka from 3- 5 October 2012. The event will throw the spotlight on traffic management, transparency and QoS prioritization in light of the use of new services, applications and cloud computing services, and the strains on existing bandwidth.

**Q. Please tell us about ITU-IMPACT initiative?**

**A.** ITU-IMPACT is the first truly global multi-stakeholder and public-private alliance against cyberthreats. It provides ITU's 193 Member States and others with the expertise, facilities and resources to effectively enhance the global community's capability and capacity to prevent, defend against and respond to cyberthreats. As of today, 137 countries are already formally part of the ITU-IMPACT operational deployment. We have performed readiness assessments in many countries, with a number now moving to the implementation phase. We are also delighted to be providing a number of specific cyber security services to the United Nations family.

**Q. What support ITU can provide to set international policies and standards, and to build an international framework of norms and principles for cyber security and cyber peace?**

**A.** As a specialized agency, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) provides a global forum for discussing cyber security. ITU has been appointed as the sole facilitator of the WSIS Action Line C5, 'Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs' and has been entrusted by world leaders to facilitate international dialogue and cooperation.

Recognizing the growing risk of a cyber attack that could originate anywhere and affect every nation, we propose five guiding principles for establishing and protecting peace in the emerging cyber world:

- ◆ Every government should commit itself to giving its people access to communications.
- ◆ Every government will commit itself to protecting its people in cyberspace.
- ◆ Every country will commit itself not to harbor terrorists/criminals in its own territories.
- ◆ Every country should commit itself not to be the first to launch a cyber-attack on other countries.
- ◆ Every country must commit itself to collaborate with each other within an international framework of co-operation to ensure that there is peace in cyberspace.

The ITU is uniquely positioned to facilitate global dialogue among all stakeholders, as it is doing for spectrum allocation and for the International Telecommunication Regulations (ITRs). The borderless nature of cyber security requires global discussion, and only global organizations such as the UN (and ITU as its specialized agency) can ensure that agreement and consensus is achieved.





Dr. Hessa Al Jaber is the Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Information and Communication Technology, ictQATAR. She has led Qatar's ICT strategy across sectors since ictQATAR's establishment in 2004, spearheading major initiatives in government, education and business.

She has overseen the liberalization of Qatar's telecommunications market, ushering in an era of choice and competition, and directed the modernization of Qatar's ICT infrastructure.

Passionate about ensuring that the benefits of technology reach all sectors, Dr. Hessa has led numerous initiatives to make Qatar a more inclusive society through ICT. She has spearheaded the modernization of Qatar's government through ICT, streamlining processes, making government more transparent and accessible to its people, and also launching an online portal to the government, Hukoomi. She is also leading Qatar's initiative to build the first high-capacity satellite "Es'hail" to be launched in 2012.

Dr. Hessa has been instrumental in the creation of Mada, an assistive technology center that serves persons with disabilities in Qatar, as well as initiating a host of national programs that empower women and youth, and protect children online.

Prior to becoming Secretary General, Dr. Hessa was a member of the Strategic ICT Committee, responsible for shaping Qatar's national ICT strategy. She was also previously the IT advisor for Qtel and served as Chair of the Computer Science Department at Qatar University.

Dr. Hessa currently serves as a Commissioner on the WHO/ITU Commission on Information & Accountability for Women & Children's Health, and is a member of several Boards, including the Board of Regents of Qatar University, the Board of Governors of the American School of Doha, Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation Journals, Qatar Foundation National Research Forum, Qatar Financial Markets Authority, the Network of Global Agenda Councils of the WEF, and the Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development (GAID). She holds a Bachelor of Science (Engineering) from Kuwait University and Master's Degree and Ph.D in Computer Science from George Washington University, Washington, DC.



**Dr. Hessa Sultan Al Jaber**  
Secretary General  
ictQATAR

## Q. What is Qatar's Digital Agenda?

A. Qatar's digital agenda is a five-year plan that aims to create a knowledge-based economy in Qatar that will drive sustainable development and societal benefits for all. It details the key policies, programs and initiatives in information and communication technology that will be implemented across sectors in the country. It has three primary objectives. Firstly, to advance the ICT sector in the country, secondly to enrich the lives of all members of society through ICT and thirdly, to establish Qatar as a regional leader in Arab-originated content.

The plan is structured around five strategic thrusts, all of which play a part in achieving our broader goals. The strategic thrusts or areas of focus are improving connectivity, boosting capacity, fostering economic development, enhancing public service delivery and advancing societal benefits.

## Q. ictQATAR is in the process of deploying the FTTH network What role Q.NBN is playing in FTTH deployment?

A. Broadband provides tremendous opportunities for economic and social innovation and Qatar is committed to bringing high-speed broadband to everyone in the country by 2015. In partnership with Internet service providers, Qatar's government will work to build the next-generation of fiber to home networks. The Qatar National Broadband Company was established in 2011 to lead these efforts. This company will be focusing solely on the build out of the necessary passive infrastructure.

ictQATAR is planning a range of initiatives to drive demand for and uptake of broadband in the country. Among these initiatives is the fostering of a digital content ecosystem that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship including national digitization and cloud computing for government, enterprises and individuals. Also, ictQATAR is leading numerous ICT initiatives across the government and promoting ICT adoption in education, healthcare and businesses, as well as implementing programs to enhance e-skills and digital literacy in Qatar.

## Q. How will FTTH implementation in Qatar open the door of advancements in the broadband world?

A. The Qatar National Broadband Network (QNBN) is a considerable financial investment on the part of Qatar, but the government expects it to have significant returns that will benefit future generations. According to the recent

World Economic Forum Global Information Technology Report, there is a strong correlation between broadband penetration and global competitiveness. In addition, a 2009 Booz & Company study found that increasing broadband penetration has a direct impact on a country's GDP growth. We expect improved broadband to accelerate innovation and knowledge expansion across the government and private sectors, improve the quality and efficiency of ICT services, increase competition and choice in the ICT market and increase the resiliency of Qatar's ICT infrastructure overall.

## Q. How is ictQATAR planning to drive demand and uptake for broadband in the country? Also please tell us about Qatar's Digital Content Ecosystem and its significance?

A. Beyond building the network and continuing to increase its penetration, there is the need to build demand for use of the broadband network. We expect QNBN to be a strong competitive advantage across a variety of sectors that will stimulate more demand for access. Companies will be able to offer new products and services as a result of greater broadband access and speeds on both the supply and demand side. Qatar also foresees the emergence of vibrant digital communities as a result of high speed broadband. These digital communities could span all sectors and Qatar's government is working in a variety of these sectors to build demand, including programs in e-health, e-education, e-commerce and e-sustainability.

In healthcare, education, finance, science, energy and the environment, high speed broadband has the potential to enable amazing advancements. The realm of what is possible in terms of services and applications grows exponentially as broadband capacity and speed is increased. For example, in healthcare, a basic broadband connection can allow for the sharing of electronic health records, but with a high speed network, complex images, such as brain scans can be shared in real time, saving lives and true tele-medicine can occur in even remote areas. For businesses, high speed access will create new business opportunities as potential customers are also able to access digital content at high speeds. From new applications to new devices to new multimedia offerings, I expect QNBN to spur considerable innovation in Qatar's ICT sector.

**Q. How do you see the future of ICT and telecoms industry in SAMENA region?**

**A.** Information and communication technology are fundamental to a prosperous future for our region. The Internet and other technologies have the power to connect, inspire and empower. They enable new levels of global communications and interactions and are integral for any nation that wants to be a part of the emerging knowledge economy.

The region must collectively work towards improving ICT development, and this will require involvement from both the public and private sectors. Issues that must be considered include how to harness the power of technology to stimulate job growth in the region, ways to improve the digital literacy of all our citizens, approaches to encouraging entrepreneurship in the tech realm, as well as collaborative solutions to key policy and regulatory issues in telecommunications and technology. These topics clearly go well beyond basic IT infrastructure needs and delve deeply into the societal impacts and implications of connectivity.

I believe the region has great potential for being an integral part of the global knowledge economy and a forward looking, collaborative approach to ICT in the region is fundamental to our success.

**Q. In your opinion, how are consumers affected by the traditional broadband technology? How is FTTH going to improve the Quality of Service?**

**A.** Traditional broadband technology has been integral to the development of the Internet, especially in terms of the content and services that can be made available as a result of high-speed connectivity. As we continue to innovate in the digital realm, the demand for ever increasing speeds and increased bandwidth must be addressed to ensure continued innovation and development. The Qatar National Broadband Network will deploy the latest broadband technology to ensure Qatar can meet the needs of its citizens for years to come, help spur new businesses and accelerated innovation around it.

**Q. Is ictQatar looking at infrastructure sharing regulations to boost FTTH deployments? Do you think PPP(Public Private Partnership) would expedite the process of FTTH deployment?**

**A.** Building a national broadband network in Qatar is being done in consultation with service providers in the country to best leverage existing infrastructure and resources, and to ensure we meet our goal of connecting everyone in Qatar by 2015.

## INTERNET GOVERNANCE AND THE FUTURE OF INTERNET

### Mr. Thomas Wilson

Director and Member of Executive Committee  
CEO & Executive Managing Director  
SAMENA Telecommunications Council



**Q. How do you look at the Internet's neutrality causing a barrier to operator's business plans?**

A. The Internet is an instrument that is crucial for society. The Internet is highly valuable in multiple ways. All must have unfettered access to the Internet and such access is in my opinion, a right. How the Internet is used and the related experience on the use of the Internet is a totally different issue. Network access is a must that obviously must be provided unfettered with rules and regulations, while allowing equal access for all. The experience gained though, is something that must be offered where the Operator network and infrastructure is accounted for and truly positioned for return on equity.

**Q. What is your viewpoint on Digital Dividend in overcoming the digital divide, particularly in terms of broadband?**

A. The Digital Dividend as a subject matter is very important. Simply put, this issue represents scarce resource management and how it is used. All stakeholders believe they have equal importance with regard to the allocation of these resources. The evolution of society and how people communicate however has changed and the means to communicate with modern means and on a mobile basis is highly important. Operators need and require enough spectrum to provide the high speed bandwidth for the bandwidth hungry content applications of today. The demand of consumers on both fixed and mobile wireless networks is far outstripping capacity. The need for effective spectrum management has never been more important. The cost of rolling out today's latest technologies also is highly important in the argument of sub 1G spectrum for both Digital Dividend 1 and 2. Sub 1G spectrum allows for much more efficient rollout of high-speed broadband technology, for the use of rural and non-urban applications. These cost efficiencies mean that operators can provide broadband services to more users faster and more efficiently.

**Q. What is your view on the regulatory requirement that there be "no traffic discrimination"?**

A. This totally depends on the interpretation of discrimination. Is the discrimination based on access to the network or is the interpretation-based terminology that incorporates value based usage oriented services? There should be no access discrimination allowed; however the official position statement has yet to be released. Our early view is that right to access is highly neutral and there should not be discrimination on the right of access to the Internet.

**Q. How SAMENA is looking at ITRs in terms of emerging trends in technologies, policies and regulations? What is SAMENA Council's position on ITRs?**

A. The ITRs are based on what seems age old Agreements that were construed in 1988, when the Internet was in its infancy. The industry in some ways has changed greatly and values assessed to the use of the Internet have an all-together different understanding. The technologies have advanced, and in some distinct markets and measures, both Policy and Regulation have both matured. However, the fact is that competition and the market-based economy still exists and the fundamental elements of the economy still exist. Therefore all interests must truly understand what are the values of today's society and what also drives the economy and how the economy works. The SAMENA Council is still developing its position on the subject, through dialogue with all stakeholders and its constituent membership base. The issue however is a very compelling one which will at WCIT 2012, will determine how the Internet and Telephony work on a cross border basis for many years to come.

**Q. Will having all traffic on “best effort basis” affect QoS and revenue streams for the operator?**

A. Customers must have access to the broadband networks of today and have the options to choose the type of experience they want to have while using the Internet. It is highly important for the operators and service providers alike to allow equal access to the network, while also gauging the use of the network for providing an experience the customer is looking for. The Internet is different than a voice network obviously and as such, terminologies are changing, and if network operators are able to effectively manage the usage of their facility based networks, then best effort basis shall be based on the choice of experience the consumers choose when selecting the services they wish to use. This is the new environment. What may happen if not managed well, is that usage by consumers on a broadband network can potentially not be cost effective, if the experience quotient is not accounted for. If QoS is affected by best effort basis, then the network is liable for congestion issues. This is why operators must be allowed to provide for experience options in their network service offerings.

**Q. How do you look at the collaboration and knowledge sharing among different stakeholders, as appropriate, to facilitate ITRs?**

A. Collaboration, dialogue and knowledge sharing are highly important amongst all stakeholders, not only on the ITRs but also on all issues and topics that effect all in the ecosystem. It is highly important to know and understand the views of all stakeholders and to respect these interests. It is highly important that the private sector be heard for investment is essential to the success of the sector. Collaboration, dialogue and knowledge sharing are actually the first ingredient of any new policy construction environment, in my opinion.

**Q. In the SAMENA region, much progress has been made with regard to market liberalization. What role do you think policy makers and the application of the new ITRs should play to be able to sustain this momentum?**

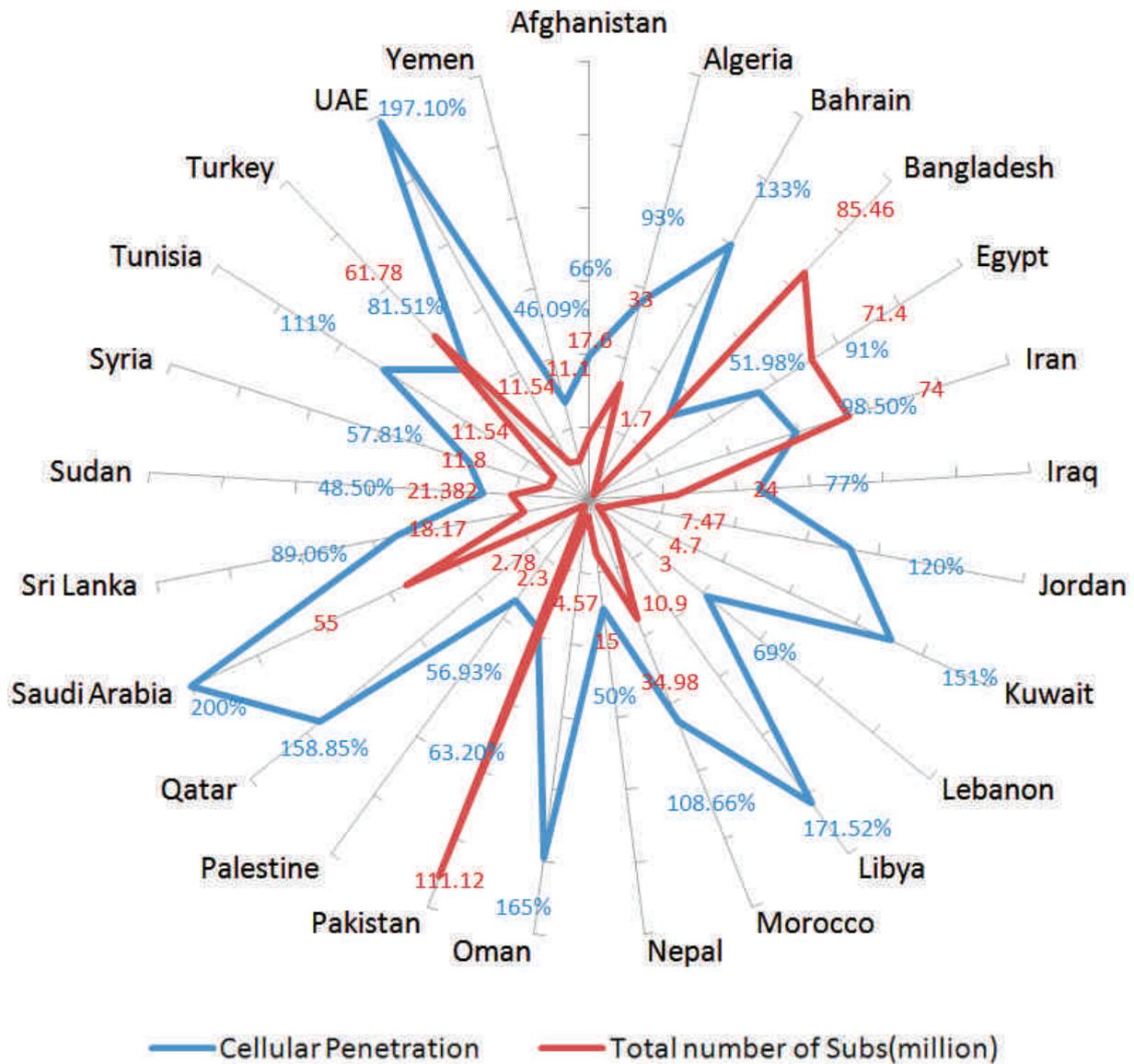
A. Competition is important. Competition has helped serve viral like growth in the region. It is critical that the levers pushed and pulled create an ICT sector that thrives, where all stakeholders are able to meet successes, where consumers receive high quality reliable services at a competent price, where consumers can see choices in services and strong new broadband applications and where investors are able to capably invest in the infrastructure that supports high consumer expectations and national and global enterprise requirements. There is a balance obviously that must be met, which creates a tremendous opportunity for all stakeholders. The balance has to allow for investors to have the confidence in the market and in the ability to have reasonable return on equity, as well as allowing for new and valid investments in technologies and infrastructure that permit the high speed broadband applications of today's content requirements.

**Q. In the context of the ITRs treaty, what would SAMENA recommend and emphasize regarding the key issues that should be in the limelight in the WCIT forum?**

A. There are many interesting areas of the ITRs where changes are being suggested from workgroups across the globe. The ITRs encompass many areas of interest and each brings its own focal points. The SAMENA council is currently working the issue through its ITRs EC task force and is working to generate its position. A very thorough and deep effort is being made to truly reach a consensus amongst the SAMENA operator membership in this very important topic.

- a. Timeline has been built that will provide SAMENA membership the opportunity to convene with other like minded entities to work together toward this very important area of interest. The SAMENA Council and ETNO are sharing their points of view and understandings, for in many areas; they both share many similar issues as well as views, where operators and investors alike are likely to see some impact, both potentially good and bad.
- B. What is most important regarding all of the questions asked is that an awareness of the issues is fully developed amongst all stakeholders and that all parties are able to voice their opinions with fair value? The Internet is too important of a subject for any stakeholders to not be a party to related discussions. In addition, the interests of the consumers, governments and investors all must share in the development of effective tools to help continue foster the growth of one of the most essential facets of society today.

SAMENA Region: Cellular Penetration vs. Subscriber Base

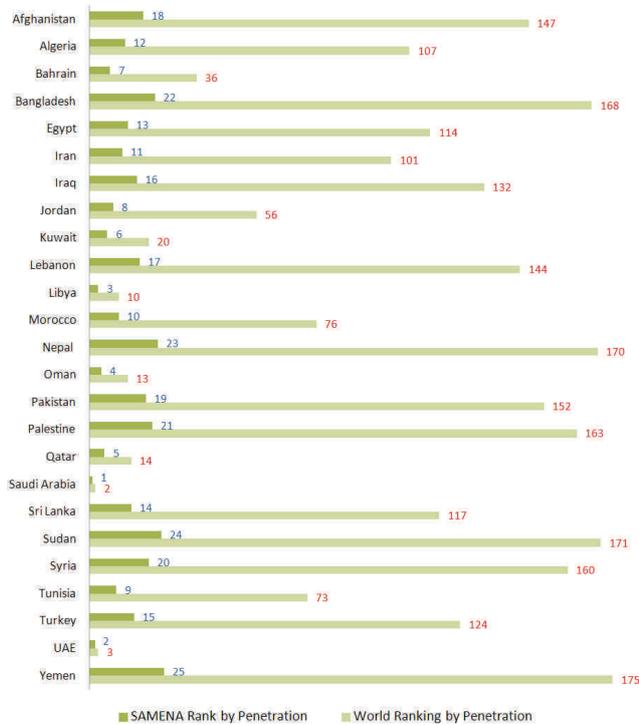


**Image Source:** SAMENA

**Data Source:** NRAs, Industry news and reports

**Research Note:** Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia, and Libya have the highest mobile penetration rates in their respective regions, namely South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. Overall, Saudi Arabia is at number 1 in terms of mobile penetration rate, whereas United Arab Emirates is at number 2. Penetration rates are well above 100 in 10 countries of the SAMENA region, while 13 countries have mobile penetration rates of 50 to 100. Only 2 countries are still below 50 in terms of mobile penetration - Sudan and Yemen. Meanwhile Pakistan, Iran and Egypt have the biggest subscriber base in the respective regions of South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. Overall, Pakistan is at number 1 in terms of subscriber base and is followed by Bangladesh.

### SAMENA: Regional vs. Global Ranking wrt Penetration

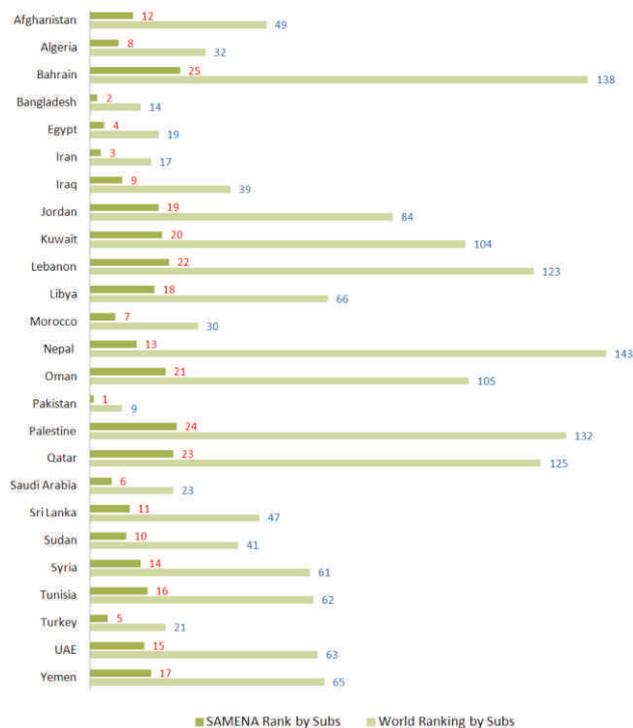


**Image Source:** SAMENA

**Data Source:** NRAs, Industry news, ITU, Industry reports, SAMENA

**Research Note:** Saudi Arabia has the highest penetration rate in the SAMENA region. Globally, Saudi Arabia is placed at number 2 with respect to highest penetration rates. Globally Saudi Arabia, UAE and Libya are in the top 10 countries with highest mobile penetration rates. Qatar and Oman lie between the 10th and 20th rank whereas the other countries are below the 100th position globally.

### SAMENA: SAMENA vs. Global Ranking wrt Subscriber Base



**Image Source:** SAMENA

**Data Source:** NRAs, Industry news, ITU, Industry reports, SAMENA

**Research Note:** Pakistan has the highest number of mobile subscribers in the SAMENA region. Globally, Pakistan is placed at number 9 with respect to highest number of mobile subscribers and is the only country in top 10. Similarly, Bangladesh, Egypt and Iran lie between the 10th and 20th rank with respect to number of mobile subscribers.



# REGULATORY NEWS

## Mobile Number Portability (MNP) A Year Away: BTRC

Mobile number portability (MNP) will be available to Bangladeshi cell phone users in around a year, according to Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) chairman Zia Ahmed. The regulatory chief told Bdnews24.com that MNP is expected to be introduced after the BTRC and the telecoms ministry set out guidelines and implement some new technological solutions. Ahmed said that the regulator had begun initiatives to introduce the service after 'resolving some technological issues.' The parliamentary standing committee on the telecoms ministry recommended that the industry watchdog introduce MNP within the current year, at a meeting on 8th January. The issue was included in the 2G mobile license renewal guidelines, and a four-member committee led by a director was formed to prepare guidelines on number portability – which are nearly finished, according to the report. Aside from technical issues, cost/revenue sharing agreements between operators related to MNP must be settled.

## NCC to Grant New Fixed Line Licenses Next Year

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) plans to award additional CDMA fixed line telephony licenses during 2013 to help drive expansion of broadband infrastructure across the country. 'The licenses will be issued to revive the fixed line telecommunication services that have been comatose and will benefit our broadband initiative,' Bloomberg quotes the NCC's CEO Eugene Juwah as saying in an interview in Lagos. In stark contrast to the country's booming wireless market, which boasts over 90 million mobile subscribers, Nigeria's broadband sector is severely underdeveloped with an estimated 200,000 customers having signed up to high speed internet services, according to TeleGeography's GlobalComms Database. The NCC hopes that the award of new fixed line concessions will 'enhance competition among telecom operators, ensure high quality services, and drive down tariffs and by those factors make more choices available to subscribers.'

## PTA Completes Targets for Year

## 2011

Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) held a special meeting at its Headquarters in Islamabad to review the progress of target and goals set for its divisions for the year 2011. The meeting was chaired by Chairman and attended by member (Technical) and senior PTA officials. During the meeting Divisional heads presented progress of tasks allocated to respective Division for the previous year. During this meeting the authority also approved the tasks assigned to each Division for the year 2012. The Authority was pleased to note that more than 95% of the targets and goals were achieved during the year 2011. Dr. Mohammad Yaseen expressed his satisfaction over the achievement made during the year 2011 and appreciated the performance of PTA employees for their dedication and hard work which made it possible to achieve such a high percentage of success. He directed all PTA employees to work with the same zeal and further improve PTA performance and raise the success bar even more high.

## NTA Reports Strong Rise in Telecoms Users in Nepal

Figures published by the Nepal Telecommunications Authority (NTA) show that the country was home to 15.034 million fixed and mobile telephony users at 14 December 2011, up from 13.762 million three months earlier, a combined Teledensity of 56.46% up from 48.14%. The regulator said there were more than 13.354 million mobile connections, broken down as 12.498 million (GSM) and 856,234 (CDMA) – and 845,542 fixed lines in service (618,426 PSTN and 227,116 WiLL). Furthermore, the watchdog noted that some 832,366 people were using Land Mobile Services (LMS) and 1,742 had a Global Mobile Personal Communication System (GMPCS) satellite phone. In addition, the total number of broadband connections in the mountain Kingdom at 14 December 2011 stood at 125,151, including 77,737 (ADSL), 30,495 (wireless or fiber-optic) and 16,919 (cable modem) lines. More than a million people were also hooked up to the internet via a (sub-broadband) GPRS or CDMA2000 1x link and 19,671 were using dialup.

## CRTC Introduces Policy to Encourage IP Adoption in Canada

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) introduced a policy that will encourage large telephone companies to adopt IP throughout their networks. The CRTC has also simplified the rules under which the costs of transferring telephone calls between a wireless and a wire line provider are shared. A key point was the different obligations between independent wireless providers and those that are affiliated with a larger communications company. Currently, independent providers are responsible for paying the entire cost unless they allow alternative long-distance providers access to their networks. Under the CRTC's policy, wireless providers

will no longer be required to give this access to alternative long-distance providers since they already offer a variety of plans and Canadians can choose from other long-distance options, –such as prepaid cards and local access numbers.

## Nigeria to Boost ICT Infrastructure with New Deal

Nigeria's Minister of Communications and Technology has inked a new deal with Cross Rivers state government to increase the state's information and technology infrastructure as well as to create a knowledge city. Nigeria's Minister of Communications and Technology Omobola Johnson said that it should help "boost IT and telecom in rural areas and give this state the infrastructure needed to achieve its goals." According to her, the MoU marked a milestone in the efforts to develop a "vibrant software development industry that would serve the Nigerian and international market." Johnson reiterated that upon completion of the Knowledge City, it is "expected to incubate and foster spin off and start-up ICT firms and help to commercialize academic research in ICTs; facilitate the growth of small and medium scale ICT businesses through creative fiscal incentives and support programmes; create a pool of ICT skills and competencies that can be deployed well beyond the state; attract inward investments from more established national and international companies/mature technology businesses by offering world class scalable physical facilities and proximity to a vibrant ICT."

## Pakistan Confirms 3G License Auction Date

Pakistan's Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has confirmed the date for the country's 3G auction; sale will take place on 29th March 2012. PTA chairman has confirmed that a pre-bid conference regarding the 3G license sale will be held on 2nd March, while the qualification process for would-be bidders is expected to be completed by 12th March. A deposit of US\$31.5 million from those bidders approved to take part is then due by 22th March, in advance of the 29th March sale date. Three third-generation concessions are to be made available, each of which will be valid for a 15-year period, and the government has set a base price of US\$210 million for each license. The sale process will be open to both those operators already active in the Pakistani wireless sector, as well as to new players, and chairman has noted that each bidder may win a maximum of two licences. In line with previous reports meanwhile, it has also been confirmed that the winners of the new concessions will only be allowed to launch commercial services using the frequencies after March 2013.



## A SNAPSHOT OF REGULATORY ACTIVITIES IN SAMENA REGION

### Active Consultations & Invitations for Feedback

#### **Saudi Arabia**

The Communication and Information Technology Commission (CITC) has launched a Public Consultation on the licensing process for Mobile Virtual Network Operators ("MVNO") and requested the stakeholders to participate in this process. Respondents are particularly invited to submit comments to the CITC on:

- The regulatory context and principles to be incorporated into the MVNO scheme in Saudi Arabia
- The proposed license for Mobile Virtual Network Operators ("MVNOs")
- The selection method proposed to select initial MVNO licensees; and
- The proposed Guidelines to assist the development of partnering agreements between MVNOs and mobile Facilities Based Host Providers ("Host FBPs").

The comments are to be submitted by March 3, 2012. (January 18, 2012) [www.citc.gov.sa](http://www.citc.gov.sa)

#### **Tunisia**

The national regulator INT as part of its duties to the establishment of alternative procedures for resolving disputes relating to domain names has called expression of interest for the selection of the arbitrators to ensure mission to arbitration in dispute resolutions relating to domain names. February 10, 2012 has been fixed as the last date for submission of EOIs. (January 27, 2012) [www.intt.tn](http://www.intt.tn)

# RECENT POLICY & REGULATORY DEVELOPMENTS

## SAMENA Country Updates

### Algeria

#### Chairperson: Ms. Zohra Dourdour

[Regulatory Authority for Post & Telecommunication (ARPT)]  
[info@artp.dz](mailto:info@artp.dz), [www.artp.dz](http://www.artp.dz)

Vimpelcom and Ministry of Finance have signed a non-binding MoU to explore the sale of a majority stake in Orascom Telecom Algeria (OTA) by the Russian company to the state. The cellco has been the subject of an ownership dispute ever since the Algerian government expressed a desire to nationalize the company, despite Vimpelcom's acquisition of OTH's assets in early 2011. The terms and conditions of the sale are yet to be finalized, but Vimpelcom is believed to be seeking to retain management control over OTA, as well as permission to continue to consolidate the operator under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). (January 9, 2012) [www.telegeography.com](http://www.telegeography.com)

### Bahrain

#### Chairman & General Director: Mr. Mohamed Bubashait

[Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA)]  
[contact@tra.org.bh](mailto:contact@tra.org.bh), [www.tra.org.bh](http://www.tra.org.bh)

Two mobile operators in Bahrain have announced new developments in their rollouts of 4G Long Term Evolution (LTE) services. Viva Bahrain launched a small-scale LTE network on New Year's Day 2012 with coverage of the 'Bahrain City Centre' retail and leisure complex in central Manama. Meanwhile Batelco held a successful LTE trial in late-December 2011 at its Hamala headquarters, part of the latest phase of its network evolution project begun in mid-2010. Viva Bahrain completed a nationwide rollout of DC-HSPA+ in November 2011, following the technology's launch in May that year, and having entered the Bahraini 3G market in March 2010 over a commercial HSPA+ (21Mbps) network providing national coverage, which reached 97.2% of the population by mid-2011. (January 3, 2012) [Gulf Daily News](http://www.gulf-daily-news.com)

### Bangladesh

#### Chairman: Maj. Gen. Zia Ahmed

[Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC)]  
[btrc@btrc.gov.bd](mailto:btrc@btrc.gov.bd), [www.btrc.gov.bd](http://www.btrc.gov.bd)

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) launched a special body to thwart cyber crimes against the country and ensure national security. The body, "Bangladesh Computer Security Incident Response Team (BD-CSIRT)", the first of its kind in the country, started working to this end. The BD-CSIRT is mainly assigned to identify the sites, persons or institutions engaged in harmful activities against the state, society and political and religious beliefs using mobile phones, websites and different social networking sites. (January 27, 2012) [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net)

The Securities and Exchange Commission has approved the initial public offering (IPO) prospectus of Bangladesh

Submarine Cable Company. Submarine Cable Company will float BDT 30.1(US\$ 0.35) million ordinary shares of BDT10 (US\$ 0.12) each at an offer price of BDT 35 (US\$ 0.41) per share. The working capital will be used in setting up another substitute cable line to ensure uninterrupted voice and data supplies. Bangladesh Submarine Company will be the second telecoms company after mobile operator Grameenphone to be listed on the local stock market. (January 23, 2012) [www.telecompaper.com](http://www.telecompaper.com)

The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) will start issuing new licenses for international VoIP telephony by April 2012. BTRC chairman told that the telecoms ministry recently sent the 'finalized' draft licensing policy to the regulator for final scrutiny, and that, subsequently, 'applications for licenses will be invited after finalizing the policy within two to two-and-a-half months.' Around 40 million total incoming/outgoing minutes of calls are legally made per day, the regulator calculates, while estimating that the government loses BDT50 million (US\$587,000) in potential revenues every day due to illegal VoIP. (January 18, 2012) [www.bdnews24.com](http://www.bdnews24.com)

As per Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) mobile number portability (MNP) is expected to start within six months. Bangladesh has six mobile operators who served 84.07 million customers as of November 2011. (January 9, 2012) [The Daily Star](http://www.thedailystar.com)

BTRC has issued licenses to six companies for the laying of international terrestrial cables (ITC), in hopes of improving the country's international connectivity. The licenses, issued were handed to Novocom Limited, Asis-AHL JV, BD Link Communication Ltd, Mango Teleservices Ltd, Summit Communications Ltd and Fibre@Home Limited. (January 6, 2012) [www.telecomasia.net](http://www.telecomasia.net)

The number of mobile phone users in Bangladesh reached 84.07 million at the end of November 2011. The market's largest operator, Grameenphone, added 0.42 million customers in November to reach 36.11 million. Second-largest operator Banglalink's customer base reached 23.36 million after adding 0.68 million customers in November while Robi added 0.3 million customers to 15.85 million. Bharti Airtel's Bangladesh operation reached 5.80 million customers in November, up from 5.57 million in October. State-run Teletalk had 1.19 million customers in November while lone CDMA mobile operator Citycell's customer based remained the same at 1.73 million. (January 2, 2012) [www.telecompaper.com](http://www.telecompaper.com)

BTRC is expecting to earn more than BDT 80 billion through a 3G spectrum auction by June. The regulator is hopeful that it will realize the money from the mobile phone operators.

BTRC has almost completed the process of appointing a consultancy firm to finalize the guidelines and policy for auctioning off the license. (January 2, 2012) **Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha**

## Egypt

### Executive President: Dr. Amr Badawi

[National Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (NTRA)]  
info@tra.gov.eg, www.ntra.gov.eg

Egypt could soon see a fourth mobile phone operator, with Telecom Egypt keen to obtain a license that would let it lease infrastructure from other providers and offer its own call services. Another operator in Egypt's crowded mobile services market raises the prospect of greater competition and hence better deals for consumers. Landline monopoly Telecom Egypt (TE) sent a release to the stock exchange saying it will apply for the 'virtual' license if the possibility is offered by Egypt's telecoms regulator. Egypt currently has three mobile providers: Etisalat Egypt, Vodafone Egypt and Mobinil. The head of the National Telecom Regulatory Authority (NTRA), Amr Badawi, told that his organization is considering offering an MVNO license to Telecom Egypt and the decision "might be taken within a month (January 29, 2012) <http://english.ahram.org.eg>

Ministry of ICT has formed five committees to tackle problems telecom operators are having, reports the Egypt State Information Service. The groups will consist of representatives from the ministry, the administrative development ministry, the IT industry development agency and the business sector. (January 3, 2012) [www.telecompaper.com](http://www.telecompaper.com)

## Iraq

### CEO: Dr. Buhan Shawi

[Communication & Media Commission (CMC)]  
enquiries@cmc.iq, www.cmc.iq

STC has pulled out of the running for Iraq's fourth national mobile license. According to CEO Hasbani, the firm abandoned its plan to bid for the concession after delays in awarding the contract. The company will only be interested in the Iraqi license if it receives 'concrete' information from the government, Hasbani said. Plans for the auction of Iraq's fourth mobile license received final cabinet approval in May 2010, by which time 15 firms had reportedly expressed an interest in entering bids. (January 30, 2012) [www.telegeography.com](http://www.telegeography.com)

Qatar has a key role in delivering the high capacity telecommunications network to Iraq after Gulf Bridge International (GBI) landed early this week its first ever subsea cable there. The Qatar Investment Authority as well as Qatar Foundation is part of the sovereign wealth fund shareholders of Qatar-based GBI which invested US\$500m to build the more advanced undersea cable system across the Middle East and Europe. With broadband penetration in Iraq currently standing at less than three percent, the connection marks a significant milestone for the nation's telecom sector. (January 19, 2012) **The Peninsula**

## Jordan

### Chairman & CEO: Mr. Fadi Kawar

[Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (TRC)]  
fadi.kawar@trc.gov.jo, www.trc.gov.jo

Jordan and the EU launched a program to improve the telecommunications sector's competitiveness and quality. The project, called the Jordan-EU Program for Institutional Strengthening of the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC), will be implemented through a European Union consortium from France, Spain and Italy with funding from the EU. The program, which will be implemented over a period of 24 months, aims to support the TRC in developing its regulatory framework and operational capacities to be in line with international standards and EU best practices. (January 16, 2012) **Jordan Times**

The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) has revoked the license of digital trunking operator XPress. The operator XPress ceased its operations more than a year ago after the company encountered financial difficulties, though it has recently announced that it is close to concluding a deal with an investor that will allow it to resume offering its services. (January 12, 2012) [www.zawya.com](http://www.zawya.com)

Jordan's parliament has instructed that an investigation be carried out regarding the sale of local telco Umniah, which is now owned by Batelco. During two weeks of discussions on a number of potential corruption cases, MPs criticized the way that the privatization process had been carried out. (January 6, 2012) **The Jordan Times**

A study by the TRC revealed that almost half of all cellphone subscribers in Jordan are dissatisfied with mobile networks' performance during emergencies and special occasions such as holidays. Mobile penetration in Jordan reached 120% as of the end of September last year, with about 7.4 million devices, according to TRC figures. In a recent TRC study on mobile users' satisfaction with their services, 55.6% said they were satisfied with the coverage of mobile networks in their areas, 61.4% said they were satisfied with the Internet connection speed on their mobile devices, 67.5% voiced satisfaction with the clarity of sound when making calls, and 67% said they were satisfied with the quality of multimedia messages. But only 50.4% of mobile subscribers in the Kingdom said they were satisfied with the quality of services offered by mobile networks during holidays and emergencies, according to the study. (January 3, 2012) [www.zawya.com](http://www.zawya.com)

## Kuwait

### Minister of Communication: Dr. Mohammed Al-Baseeri

[Ministry of Communication (MOC)]  
<http://moc.kw>

The Ministry of Communication has signed a contract with Etihad Etisalat "Mobily" to connect the National Optical Fibers' network with the service providers in Kuwait, which will enable them to benefit from the company's infrastructure. The underground cable is set to deliver

enormous bandwidth allowing Internet service providers in Kuwait to benefit from Mobily's Fiber Optic that runs through the borders between the two countries. (January 3, 2012) *The Saudi Gazette*

## Lebanon

### Acting Chairman & CEO: Dr. Imad Hoballah

[Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA)]  
imad.hoballah@tra.gov.lb, www.tra.gov.lb

The telecoms Minister pledged a US\$110 million investment to upgrade the country's two state-run, privately managed cellular networks to improve services. The minister said that the new 'National Quality of Services' program 'will put an end to the poor mobile services. This plan will take eight months to be completed. (December 16, 2011) *Daily Star*

## Morocco

### Director General: Mr. M. Azdine El MountassirBillah

[Agence Nationale de Reglementation des Telecommunications (ANRT)]  
info@anrt.net.ma, www.anrt.net.ma

Mobile users in Morocco continued their upward push through 2011, with the number of users rising 14.29% to 36.55 million. According to a report from the telecom regulator ANRT, the result is a 113.57% penetration rate. Growth in post-paid customers also saw an increase of 26.66%, compared to only 13.8% in 2010. "Mobile voice traffic increased by 65.6% and SMS traffic by 31.38%, compared to last year. Maroc Telecom saw its mobile market share fall to 48.85% at the end of 2011, compared to 52.81% a year earlier, Medi Telecom's dipped to 32.92% from 33.74% and Wana Corporate's (Inwi) grew to 20.23% from 13.45%," the report said. As mobile users continued to climb, fixed landlines saw a drop in subscribers by almost five percent, down to 3.57 million, or a penetration rate of 11.08%. The report said fixed call traffic came down by 9.42% year-on-year. "Wana Corporate had a 64.59% share of the fixed phone market at the end of 2011, followed by Maroc Telecom with 34.79% and Medi Telecom with 0.62%," the report added. (January 30, 2012) [www.itnewsafrika.com](http://www.itnewsafrika.com)

## Nepal

### Chairman: Mr. Bhesh Raj Kanel

[Nepal Telecommunication Authority (NTR)]  
chairman@nta.gov.np, www.nta.gov.np

Figures published by the Nepal Telecommunications Authority (NTA) show that the country was home to 15.034 million fixed and mobile telephony users at December 14, 2011 up from 13.762 million three months earlier, a combined teledensity of 56.46% (up from 48.14%). At that date the regulator said there were more than 13.354 million mobile connections – broken down as 12.498 million (GSM) and 856,234 (CDMA) – and 845,542 fixed lines in service (618,426 PSTN and 227,116 WiLL). Furthermore, the watchdog noted that some 832,366 people were using Land Mobile Services (LMS) and 1,742 had a Global Mobile Personal Communication System (GMPCS) satellite phone. In addition, the total number of broadband connections in the mountain Kingdom stood at 125,151, including 77,737 (ADSL), 30,495 (wireless or fiber-optic) and 16,919 (cable modem) lines. More than a million people were also hooked

up to the internet via a (sub-broadband) GPRS or CDMA2000 1x link and 19,671 were using dial-up. (January 30, 2012) [www.telegeography.com](http://www.telegeography.com)

An increase in telecommunications provider in Nepal has helped to boost –the Rural Telecom Development Fund but the regulator has not been able to use the fund to increase access to telecommunications services in rural areas. The fund currently stands at NPR 4.03 billion. Telecommunications firms and ISPs are required to pay two percent of their annual revenues to the fund. The regulator has not been able to use the fund due to a lack of coordination between government agencies. (January 29, 2012) *The Himalayan Times*

Nine different telecoms operators have applied for licenses to offer IPTV services in Nepal and could receive permits within the next two months. The move to issue IPTV licenses follows an amendment to the Broadcasting Act in 2009/10. (January 16, 2012) *MyRepublica*

## Oman

### Chief Executive Officer: Dr. Hamed Al-Rawahi

[Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA)]  
traoman@tra.gov.om, www.tra.gov.om

Omantel has been voted once again the best telecoms service provider in the Sultanate in an independent survey conducted by the business magazine Business Today. Around 100 executives including Chairmen, CEOs and General Managers from a cross section of Oman's business community voted in the survey and gave Omantel a clear lead as the number one telecoms brand in the Sultanate. Omantel has also been selected the most favored brand in seven different categories included in the survey namely Omanis, Arab and Asian Expatriates, over 40 years and under 40 years segments of the business executives — reinforcing the company's leading position among different segments of its customers. (January 4, 2012) *Oman Daily Observer*

## Pakistan

### Chairman: Dr. Muhammad Yaseen

[Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA)]  
Chairman@pta.gov.pk, www.pta.gov.pk

Pakistan's Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has set the date for the country's often-delayed 3G auction as the March 29, 2012. PTA Chairman, Mohammed Yaseen told that the base price for the auction would be US\$210 million. "We're expecting 10 to 15 potential investors in the initial bidding process," Yaseen told. The 3G licenses will vary from 8 to 15 years in duration, and there will be a US\$31.5 million deposit for any bidders. Any incumbent mobile networks awarded a 3G license will be able to offer services immediately, although new entrants will not be allowed into the market until March 2013. (January 18, 2012) *Reuters*

Telecom sector is a significant contributor to the national exchequer depositing over Rs.100 billion (US\$1.1) on average every year. An amount of Rs 627 billion (US\$ 6.94) has been deposited in the national exchequer during the past six years. According to official data available, telecom

sector made its highest ever contribution to the national exchequer in the FY 2011 as around Rs 117 billion (US\$ 1.29) were placed by the telecom companies and Pakistan Telecom Authority (PTA). (January 13, 2012) <http://pakobserver.net>

Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has planned to rationalize frequency spectrum fees and pricing with the objective of establishing a fair and transparent pricing structure in order to promote uniformity, consistency and efficiency in spectrum management. In the proposed draft of regulations called "Spectrum Charging Rationalization Regulations, 2011", the authority has set US\$1,300 annual charges for channels on the account of free to air satellite TV communications. These regulations will cover services rendered through various modes including

- Private Land Mobile Wireless Service;
- Point-to-point Fixed Links in UHF,VHF,HF;
- Fixed point to point microwave;
- AM and FM Broadcasting Radio Service;
- Aeronautical and Maritime Service;
- Earth Station and TV/MMDS Satellite Communication Services.

(January 13, 2012) <http://propakistani.pk>

Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) have signed a MoU to develop a technological and regulatory framework for mobile banking. The two parties will act as facilitators and issue licenses to third party service providers and will also set performance benchmarks for mobile financial transactions. (January 12, 2012) [Pakistan Today](http://Pakistan Today)

The PTA has announced to auction WiMAX broadband frequencies of 1.9 and 3.5 GHz spectrum to potential upcoming broadband operators. Auction is likely to be held in February 2012, while it seems that the value of spectrum will be determined through bidding. The Information Memorandum (IM) containing information inter alia auction methodology and venue etc will be made available on PTA Website in coming days. (January 11, 2012) <http://propakistani.pk>

Pakistan ended September with 1.66 million broadband subscribers, up from 1.59 million subscribers in August, according to figures from the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA). The number of DSL subscribers rose to 730,346 compared with 721,560 a month earlier, while the number of Wimax internet users grew to 478,272 from 458,583 Wimax users in August. Some 403,583 people connect to the internet via EV-DO, up from 370,011 in the prior month, and 35,434 people used HFC to access the internet, compared with 35,159. Furthermore, there were 6,882 FTTH users in September, up from 6,631 a month earlier, and 2,283 broadband subscribers used other technologies. (January 9, 2012) [www.telecompaper.com](http://www.telecompaper.com)

PTA covered a wide gamut of up gradation measures to enhance the quality of its services in the year 2011. These

measures are shaped up to not only help the Authority in its individual quest for perfection; they would also cater the national interests and the development of national economy as a whole. Ever since the inception of PTA in 1996, it has been active in vying to bolster the national economy by doing its best to contribute in every way possible. The actions taken in 2011 are touted by the experts as going a long way in making the previously unfathomable targets; achievable. In synchrony with its vision, business feasibility has always been at the apex of any priority list that PTA conjures up. This coupled with the interests of the consumers, forms the foundation of the PTA structure, and its goals. And of course, with such an unambiguous approach towards, the impressive numbers posted in 2011 were a fitting outcome. Pakistan's teledensity touched 68.39 per cent – a 6.7 per cent rise from 2010. Mobile subscribers at the tail-end of 2011 were estimated to be around 108.9 million – flaunting a growth rate of 10 per cent; which is twice as much as that of the previous year. There was a precipitous ascent in mobile penetration as well, as the numbers rose to 65.4 per cent – from 60.4 per cent last year. Number of Cell sites has also increased from 30,126 in June 2010 to 31,303 when the data was collected at the end of last year. Cellular industry's ARPU also depicted a healthy increase from \$2.41 in the previous fiscal year to \$2.45 this time round. Mobilink continues its unrelenting presence at the top of the pile as far as mobile subscribers market is concerned, with a 30.7 per cent share, followed by Telenor (24.5 per cent), Ufone (18.9 per cent), Warid (16 per cent) and Zong (10 per cent). Despite wireless technologies taking over the lion's share of broadband market, the number of broadband users crossed the one million mark by rising up to 1,491,491 at the end of FY2011 from 900,648 previously – showcasing a 66 per cent jump. The broadband spread rose from 0.55 per cent to 0.89 per cent as well. PTCL was at the top of the broadband clientele with 848,379 holding 57 per cent market share. PTCL was followed by Wateen in the aforementioned stat with 218,506 customers and 15 per cent of the market share. The local loop (LL) segment of the industry also depicted a decent progression as it faced a daunting competition from the wireless solutions; including mobile cellular services. LL teledensity was calculated at 3.4 per cent, with a subscription of 5.72 million in June 2011. PTCL maintained its domineering presence, and was the dominant operator in the FLL marker with 74 per cent of the market share. The Long Distance and International (LDI) carried 11.4 billion international minutes compared to 9.5 billion minutes in the previous year – showcasing a 20 per cent gain. The telecom sector's contribution to the national exchequer was a massive Rs116.9 billion. GST/FED rose by 20 per cent to Rs52.6 billion. The total telecom revenues were at their zenith this year, reaching an all-time high of Rs362 billion. Cellular income was also bolstered and took an 11 per cent spike to Rs262 billion from Rs236 billion previously. Over the past three years, the Authority has amassed around Rs40 billion against APC for USF. In its endeavor to curtail grey traffic, the Authority saved revenue of US\$26 million. Owing to an influx of around US\$493 million in telecom and FDI of \$79

million, there was overwhelming buoyancy as far as the investment in the sector is concerned. The imports had a jump of US\$766 million from US\$725 million. Mobile handset imports soared to the \$218 million mark, showing a leap of 29 per cent. PTA left no stone unturned in its pursuit of encouraging foreign investment in our neck of the woods. Apropos balanced regulatory policy, PTA flagged, during the year industry issues, encompassing matters including; high GST, levy of provincial taxes and introducing 36 licensing. When needed PTA issued Show Cause Notices, brought about penalties, suspended licenses and sensitized telecom operators on SOPs. To further ameliorate the service quality, PTA introduced Cellular Mobile Network QoS Regulations 2011 and GPRS/EDGE Quality of Service Regulations, 2010. PTA has taken scores of initiatives to safeguard the consumer interest, including the likes of new online complaint management system, SOP to control spam, unsolicited telemarketing and a multitude of technical measures to purge out 'obnoxious and fraudulent' communication, Anti-Spam filters, common Short Code allocation, SMS blocking, Pre-NPR Data and other such facilities. The new Rabta Information Portal will also go a long way in providing the much needed information and content at a solitary place. Law enforcement agencies were also aided by PTA owing to a comprehensive subscriber verification and authentication system to deal with illegal and unverified SIMs. A wide range of measures were taken, including the unveiling of Subscriber Verification System, monitoring system, and another system to purge the database of mobile subscribers. There globally acclaimed projects were supervised via field surveys and rendezvous with Customer Service Centers. In collaboration with law enforcement agencies, PTA has carried out 45 raids since 2009 against the grey traffickers. The Authority also blocked 1095 websites after consumer complaints. Amidst Quality of Services (QoS) surveys PTA took actions against the telecom operator if there was any plunge in the required parameters, directing the respective CMTOs to improve their services. As a corollary of PTCL QoS survey, a distortion of the parameters divulged in the company's license terms and conditions was revealed and appositely dealt with after PTA issued a Show Cause Notice. PTCL also covered all the bases while orchestrating the second comprehensive QoS survey for Wireless Local-Loop (WLL) sector, of Limited Mobility verification of all operational WLL licensees and their QoS were found to be up to the mark. PTA continued to spread its message of research in the telecom sector via associations with educational institutions. Under PTA Academia Linkage program, PTA signed Memorandums of Understanding with leading universities of Pakistan to encourage research and become breeding grounds for future connoisseurs of the field. Gold medals and cash prizes to university students, who had excelled in their telecom and IT projects, were also given to further shore up the Authority's quest of expanding its repertoire. PTA's performance was praised both at the regional and international level, and the Authority was announced as the Most Progressive Telecom Regulator in South Asia for the year. Chairman PTA, Dr Mohammed Yaseen had the revered

distinction of receiving the Best Telecom Regulatory Leader of the Year from the South Asian, Middle Eastern and North African (SAMENA) Telecommunication Council. Even though PTA has reached unprecedented heights, the Authority is still vying to continue to enhance the sector in synchrony with the latest updates. PTA unveiled its 'Vision 2020' document, which envisions future developments needed to ensure that PTA continues its upsurge during the next ten years as well. The document is designed to aid policy makers in synthesizing the best policies possible to ensure that the customer sanguinity and the technological advancement continue at the same pace. It is being prognosticated that numbers of mobile users, broadband subscribers and fixed line customers will surpass the marks of 160 million, 19 million and 5 million respectively, by 2020. (January 6, 2012) [www.pakistantoday.com.pk](http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk)

Pakistan reached a total 111.126 million mobile subscribers at the end of October 2011, up from 109.692 million three months earlier, according to the Pakistan Telecommunications Authority. Total teledensity in Pakistan at the end of October, including fixed and WLL users, was 68.6%, up slightly from 68.3 three months earlier. Figures for the broadband market showed a total 1.657 million subscribers at the end of September, up from 1.564 million two months earlier. DSL was the most used technology with over 730,000 subscribers, followed by Wimax with over 478,000 and EVDO with almost 404,000. (January 3, 2012) [www.telecompaper.com](http://www.telecompaper.com)

Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) is planning to Auction Frequency Spectrum for Cellular Mobile Broadband Services in March this year. The license for this service will be technology neutral allowing to deploy any technology including 3G / 4G / LTE / any other emerging technologies. PTA has constituted a special committee for making preparations to conduct the auction in the most possible transparent manner. The auction process will be overseen by a joint professional group comprising of public sector stakeholders, including representatives of different ministries, PTA and FAB among others. One cellular mobile license will be auctioned in 800 MHz band while spectrum for technology neutral mobile broadband service (3G, 4G, LTE) will be auctioned in the 1900/2100 MHz bands. (January 2, 2012) [www.pta.gov.pk](http://www.pta.gov.pk)

## Qatar

### Executive Director: Ms. Christa Cramer

[The Supreme Council of Information and Communication Technology (ictQATAR)]

[info@ict.gov.qa](mailto:info@ict.gov.qa), [www.ict.gov.qa](http://www.ict.gov.qa)

ictQATAR is to issue a set of policies and guidelines to bring IT security measures up to international standards. They are aimed at promoting best practices in risk management, change management and information and security governance structure, among other areas. An ictQATAR official was quoted as saying they will be tailored to how people in Qatar communicate and use their IT systems. There will be a certification process for entities wishing to be accredited by ictQATAR, too. Manager of Government

ICT Mission Assurance at ictQATAR, said that the software controlling Qatar's infrastructure has so far remained uninfected by malicious programs. The policies and guidelines are mostly aimed at the government sector but are not restricted to it. Another official said cyber attacks on social network and e-mail accounts are a regular occurrence in Qatar. (January 5, 2012) [Gulf Times](#)

ictQATAR has announced that it will regularly publish Quality of Service (QoS) reports provided by Qtel and Vodafone. The QoS reports indicate each operators level of compliance with regards to their quality of service obligations as set forth in their licenses, although the regulator noted that the reports are based on the networks own figures and are not independently verified. The QoS reports include a range of parameters service providers are assessed on in terms of compliance, including time to solve billing complaints, network quality, complaints received per 100 subscribers, successful call ratios, dropped call rates and billing correctness. (January 2, 2012) [www.cellular-news.com](#)

### Saudi Arabia

#### Governor: Eng. Abdullah A. Al Darrab

[Communication & Information Technology Commission (CITC)]  
[info@citc.gov.sa](mailto:info@citc.gov.sa), [www.citc.gov.sa](http://www.citc.gov.sa)

Saudi Arabia's telecommunications sector is to get a major shakeup this year, with up to three new mobile operators entering the mobile phone segment, though the route they will be taking will be very different from that followed by the three existing service providers. On December 7, a spokesman for the Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC) told that three mobile virtual network operator (MVNO) licenses would be issued in 2012. The CITC statement confirmed comments made by the minister of communications and information technology, in mid-November, when he said his ministry was looking at making three MVNO licenses available in early-2012, while also all but ruling out any opening for a new mainstream mobile operator. (January 11, 2012) [english.globalarabnetwork.com](#)

Fixed-line operator Etihad Atheeb Telecommunication Co. said that a court ruled that the kingdom's telecom regulator should resolve its row with Saudi Telecom Co. The Grievances Bureau asked the regulator to allow Atheeb's international calls and pre-paid card services. The company said last year it had filed a lawsuit to the court claiming that Saudi Telecom had violated the kingdom's anti-monopoly laws and regulations by blocking a number of services to its subscribers, which forced the firm to make losses. STC rebutted the claim saying it hadn't violated any of the kingdom's regulatory laws or agreements regarding Etihad Atheeb. (January 13, 2012) [Dow Jones Newswires](#)

### Sri Lanka

#### Director General: Mr. Anusha Palpita

[Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (TRC)]  
[palpita@trc.gov.lk](mailto:palpita@trc.gov.lk), [www.trc.gov.lk](http://www.trc.gov.lk)

Telecommunications sector in Sri Lanka received US\$69 million investment in 2011. The industry received this boost

from five operators, Sri Lanka Telecom, Dialog Axiata, Etisalat, Bharathi Airtel and Mobitel. The biggest investment to the sector was made by Bharti Airtel Lanka, a subsidiary of Bharti Airtel, one of the world's largest telecom service providers, which was the fifth player in the local mobile market. The company invested \$49.9 last year. Malaysian based Dialog Axiata also invested last year to the tune of US \$31.8 million. The company's main focus last year was laying of the fiber optic cable. This was mainly to increase its broad penetration and to give faster broadband. Dialog Axiata is also being recognized as the first company under its aegis to reach the foreign direct investment milestone of one billion dollar. Dialog Axiata surpassed the one billion dollar cumulative investment milestone as at December 31, 2010 and at the completion of the rapid network expansion program would reach a total investment of approximately US\$1.2 billion since inception. Dialog also entered a Share Purchase Agreement (SPA) to acquire 100 percent of ordinary shares of the wireless fixed line operator Suntel Ltd from its current shareholders. (January 31, 2012) <http://telecomlead.com>

Sri Lanka ended the third quarter with 2.62 million fixed wireless subscribers, down 1.4% from a year earlier, while the number of wireline subscribers grew by 4.6% to 929,851. Total fixed services subscribers stood at 3.60 million, up 1.4% year-on-year. The number of mobile users rose 10.8% to 18.42 million while the number of internet users (mobile and fixed) doubled to 721,617 from 360,000 in Q3 2010. (January 30, 2012) [www.telecompaper.com](#)

A MOU was signed between the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission & Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on January 17, 2012. Both regulatory institutions have undertaken to promote the establishment and exchange of technical & institutional cooperation between the two countries as well as to contribute to the development of telecommunications under this MOU. (January 17, 2012) [www.trc.gov.lk](http://www.trc.gov.lk)

### Sudan

#### Director General: Dr. Izz Al Din Kamil Amin

[The National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC)]  
[itisalat@ntc.gov.sd](mailto:itisalat@ntc.gov.sd), [www.ntc.gov.sd](http://www.ntc.gov.sd)

The raising of taxes on all telecommunications services in Sudan have left many angry with the government. The move, approved in late December for the 2012 budget in order to overcome pitfalls from lost oil revenue as a result of South Sudan's independence last year. The tax raises were part of an emergency three-year economic program announced by the government, which includes a reduction in spending and increased tax base. Sudan's senior tax official said the government is increasing taxation on communication services from 20% to 30%, and raising taxes on the net profit of communication companies from 15% to 30%. The government has already introduced a number of austerity measures to cope with the disappearance of oil income from the south, which the finance minister said in December left a budget shortfall of some 30%. South Sudan

gained independence in July following a two-decade civil war. Since then, Sudan has witnessed spiraling inflation — which the government sees reaching 17% next year — and the sharp devaluation of the Sudanese pound. At the same time crippling debts of almost US\$ 40 billion and US economic sanctions, which have banned virtually all trade with Sudan since 1997, choke its access to external financing. (January 12, 2012) <http://bikyamasr.com>

### Tunisia

#### President: Mr. Hassoumi Zitoune

[National Telecommunication Commission (INTT)]  
[dir.coop@intt.tn](mailto:dir.coop@intt.tn), [www.intt.tn](http://www.intt.tn)

The national regulator INT as part of its duties to the establishment of alternative procedures for resolving disputes relating to domain names has called expression of interest for the selection of the arbitrators to ensure mission to arbitration in dispute resolutions relating to domain names. February 10, 2012 has been fixed as the last date for submission of EOIs. (January 27, 2012) [www.intt.tn](http://www.intt.tn)

### United Arab Emirates

#### Director General: Mr. Mohamed Nasser Al Ghanim

[Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA)]  
[info@tra.ae](mailto:info@tra.ae), [www.tra.gov.ae](http://www.tra.gov.ae)

The Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA) has clarified its regulatory role is not of an operational nature when du announced that it had successfully blocked all handsets using an invalid International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI). The TRA clarified that "the TRA is a regulatory body which exercises its official mandate through the development of policies, procedures and laws relating to any and all aspects of the telecommunications sector, which includes but is not limited to interconnection, site and facility sharing between operators, as well as the protection and safeguarding of consumer rights. The TRA

does not impose or enforce subscription prices or fees directly or indirectly through any means of official or non-conventional communication when dealing with operators or service providers (Etisalat and du). "The TRA's role with regard to prices or/and subscription fees provided by service providers is limited to the approval or rejection of proposed pricing schemes in accordance with the official price approval policy which is a regulatory role and not of an operational nature," the statement added. du's statement said that "in accordance with the Telecom Regulatory Authority (TRA)'s directive to protect the UAE's consumers from the pitfalls of using illegal fake mobile handsets as of January 24 du has successfully blocked all handsets using an invalid International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI)." (January 26, 2012) <http://gulftoday.ae>

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) has announced that the commercial launch of fixed line network sharing between the country's two telecoms operators, Etisalat and Du, has been postponed as the pair are not yet technically ready to implement the process. A soft-launch of bitstream access was launched by the two companies in July 2011, with a view to making the service available across the UAE by the end of the year. However, the TRA has said in a statement that it has delayed the full commercial implementation of fixed network sharing 'until the completion of the technical readiness.' The introduction of bitstream access will break the monopolies held by Etisalat and Du within their respective areas, giving business and residential customers the choice of operator for their fixed line voice and broadband services for the first time. At present Du's internet and pay-TV services only cover newly developed areas of Dubai, including Dubai Marina and Media City; while Etisalat is barred from operating in these areas, it holds a monopoly on providing fixed services in the rest of the country. (January 3, 2012)

[www.telegeography.com](http://www.telegeography.com)

## REGULATORY ACTIVITIES BEYOND THE SAMENA REGION

### Global

The global telecommunications industry continues to expand as spending by consumers and businesses for wireless services fuels industry revenue growth, says a new market analysis report from Insight Research. According to the report, telecommunications services revenue on a worldwide basis will grow from US\$2.1 trillion in 2012 to US\$2.7 trillion in 2017 at a combined average growth rate of 5.3%. The report also notes that wireless subscriber growth, particularly in Asia and other emerging markets, will raise wireless revenues by 64% from current levels, while wireline revenues show only modest growth. Nearly all of the growth in both sectors is expected to occur in broadband services, with wireless 3G and 4G broadband services projected to grow at a compounded rate of 24% over the forecast period and wireline broadband services projected to grow at a 13% compounded rate over the same forecast horizon. "Despite

global economic uncertainty, the telecommunications industry is showing strong revenue growth, which is being driven by consumer Internet usage and business mobility solutions. These are enabling new applications," says Fran Caulfield, Research Director for Insight Research. "Even amidst so much economic uncertainty, the fact remains that telecommunications is a key factor in economic growth. Telecommunications facilitates socio-economic advancement and is a critical utility for economic development, much like water and energy," Caulfield concluded. (January 4, 2012) [www.cellular-news.com](http://www.cellular-news.com)

### United States

Huawei Technologies Co Ltd said calls by six US lawmakers to investigate whether the giant Chinese telecommunications equipment maker has violated a sanctions law by supplying sensitive technology to Iran were

based on inaccurate media reports."Unfortunately, a few Members of Congress continue to cite inaccurate media reports that include groundless allegations," Huawei, the world's No.2 telecom gear maker, said in an emailed statement. Huawei, founded by Chief Executive Ren Zhengfei, has been seeking to expand in the US telecom sector, but has run into political opposition over national security concerns. Ren's background with the Chinese military has often been cited as hindering the company's progress in North America, though Huawei has repeatedly denied having any links with the armed forces. In a letter to the US Department of State, six US lawmakers have called for a government investigation into whether Huawei and other telecommunications companies violated an Iran sanctions law passed by the US Congress in 2010 by supplying sensitive technology to Iran. (January 5, 2012)

[timesofindia.indiatimes.com](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com)

## Colombia

The Ministry of ICT (MinTIC) has invited expressions of interest from industry players to participate in an auction for licenses to utilize radio spectrum in a number of frequency bands. The MinTIC will be issuing concessions for two sets of paired frequencies: 1710MHz-1755MHz with 2110MHz-2155MHz and 1850MHz-1990MHz with 2500MHz-2690MHz. No deadline for applications has been set, nor was an official start date for the tender posted. The additional spectrum is expected to be used for the development of Long Term Evolution (LTE) networks, though the MinTIC did not include any conditions relating to the spectrum's usage. (January 4, 2012)

[www.telegeography.com](http://www.telegeography.com)

## European Union

The European Commission has unveiled its concept of a European Cloud Partnership, to launch with an initial investment of EUR 10 million. The EC has been developing its strategy for cloud services for over the past year, Eurocommissioner Neelie Kroes said at the World Economic Forum in Davos. The EC had already proposed new rules for data protection in the twenty-first century, including for data in the cloud but Kroes now also wants to involve the public sector and industry, and is inviting all parties to join in an European Cloud Partnership. In the first phase, the Partnership will come up with common requirements for Cloud procurement. For this it will look at standards and security and ways to ensure competition, not lock-in. In the second phase the Partnership will deliver proof of a concept solution for the common requirements. In the third phase reference implementations will be built. Kroes expects good progress in setting the Partnership up in 2012, with first results the year after. The Commissioner stressed that the strategy is not about building a European super-Cloud but to set up a strategy as a whole to ensure Europe becomes not just Cloud-friendly, but Cloud-active. (January 26, 2012)

[www.telecompaper.com](http://www.telecompaper.com)

## United Kingdom

Telecom regulator OFCOM has outlined plans to temporarily use spectrum from the public sector to cope with increased demand for airwaves during the London 2012 Olympics. The authority said that it will borrow spectrum on a short-term basis from the Ministry of Defense and other public sector bodies, make unused frequencies available, such as the spectrum that will shortly be auctioned by OFCOM, but is currently not being used, and will use spectrum made available by the country's digital television switchover, as well as spectrum that is available without the need for a license. The body anticipates an increase in demand for bandwidth, caused by increased use of wireless cameras to achieve more dramatic and close-up action shots, more wireless microphones to add flexibility in capturing the sounds of the Games, wireless location, timing and scoring technology to give more detailed and immediate information about the event as it happens and wireless communications used by team members, sports officials, organizers and support staff. (January 25, 2012)

[www.telecoms.com](http://www.telecoms.com)

OFCOM has announced a new set of plans to extend the roll out of 4G LTE coverage in this country to encompass 98% of the UK population. That, along with plans to promote competition in the mobile arena, are the two main thrusts of OFCOM's latest consultation on the 4G roll out process, which will run over the next ten weeks (the consultation that is, not the 4G roll out). The previous consultation on the matter last year, which took place between March and May, elicited feedback on how the 4G spectrum auction will affect the mobile industry and competition within it in the future. And the latest consultation has been crafted based on that feedback. (January 12, 2012)

[www.techwatch.co.uk](http://www.techwatch.co.uk)

## France

Telecom regulator ARCEP has weighed into the polemic over Free Mobile's service launch and rival operators' unions claims that Free had switched off some of its own base stations and shifted traffic to roaming service provider Orange's network, despite its coverage requirements. ARCEP chairman Jean-Ludovic Silicani noted that adjustments are to be expected in the complex process of launching a new network. He adds that Orange, SFR and Bouygues Telecom, 3G license winners in 2001 and 2002, failed to meet their own coverage requirements. ARCEP tolerated this, Silicani said, due to operators' claims of technical and business difficulties. As for the current polemic about Free Mobile, the regulator states that ARCEP has not been contacted by any of the operators and has been given no proof of the reported allegations. Nevertheless, for reasons of transparency and serenity, ARCEP has asked Free Mobile to update information on the state of its network, providing a detailed list of base stations, those that are fully activated, and reasons which would have led it, if necessary, to switch some off. ARCEP will then verify the information in the field, using the same methodology as with its earlier field-tests. (January 30, 2012)

[www.telecompaper.com](http://www.telecompaper.com)

ARCEP has issued Orange France, SFR and Bouygues Telecom their licenses to use spectrum in the 800MHz band for LTE services. The three MNOs were selected as the winning candidates for a duplex frequency block of 10MHz on 22 December. The licenses list the obligations set out in the call for applications, along with the regional development and MVNO hosting commitments made by the three applicants. (January 18, 2012) [www.telecompaper.com](http://www.telecompaper.com)

## Norway

The Post & Telecoms Regulatory Authority (NPT) has announced that it has developed a new strategy for frequency management for the period 2012-2014. The regulator has noted that the main principles of spectrum management in the country remain unchanged, although it has revealed plans to increase the duration of newly issued concessions to 25 years or more. The NPT claims that its decision to increase the length of mobile spectrum licenses is, in part, a response to the fact that many concessions are used to provide services that require long-term investment in network infrastructure. Further, the regulator also clarified that it will continue to offer technology-neutral licenses. (January 10, 2012) [www.telegeography.com](http://www.telegeography.com)

## Italy

The Communications Authority (AGCOM) has completed 346 cases and imposed penalties worth in total EUR 8.1 million in 2011. In particular, 60 sanctions were approved by the council after recommendations from the Directorate of Consumer Protection, for a total of about EUR 3.9 million. The main infringements were the activation of unwanted services by users (EUR 1.33 million), porting problems between operators (EUR 468,000), the unlawful suspension of service and interruption of telephony services without providing the required notice (EUR 406,000), delays in handling requests for termination of services (EUR 348,000), and non-compliance with orders and information requested by the authority to verify complaints of violation of rules of the sector (EUR 315,000). (January 25, 2012) [www.telecompaper.com](http://www.telecompaper.com)

## Netherlands

The telecoms regulator OPTA will auction new mobile frequencies in October this year, in the process reserving three spectrum blocks for new market entrants, the Economic Ministry said. The market is currently dominated by three incumbent network operators – KPN Mobile The Netherlands, Vodafone Netherlands and Deutsche Telekom's local T-Mobile unit. However, the government is looking to increase competition, the Ministry said, and to that end is reserving two blocks of spectrum in the 800MHz band and one in the 900MHz band for newcomers. Alongside the lower bandwidth auctions, the OPTA is auctioning off parts of the 2.1GHz and 2.6GHz bands. Further, the Economic Ministry confirmed that the existing licenses for GSM-900 and GSM-1800 2G mobile services are set to expire on February 26, 2013 and are not extendable at this date. (January 9, 2012) [Dow Jones Newswires](http://Dow Jones Newswires)

## Hungary

Telecoms regulator NMHH has dismissed two companies from bidding in the forthcoming 900MHz radio spectrum auction. Romania-based RCS&RDS had failed to meet the requirement, as specified in the tender notice, on outstanding market surveillance fees of companies controlled by the applicant, meanwhile the application submitted by the Vietnamese Viettel Group was considered formally invalid on numerous grounds, beyond the possibility of rectification. Applications by Magyar Telekom, Telenor, Vodafone and a consortium comprising Magyar Posta, Magyar Villamosmuvek and MFB Invest have been found formally valid and therefore suitable for registration. (January 2, 2012) [www.cellular-news.com](http://www.cellular-news.com)

## Romania

Telecoms regulator ANCOM has opened a consultation on releasing additional radio spectrum that is currently part-used by the Ministry of Defense (MapN). The blocks of spectrum are in the 830-862 MHz, 1747.5-1785 MHz, 1842.5-1880 MHz and 2500-2690 MHz frequency bands. The MApN release of these bands means changing the destination and refarming these bands, and this is only possible upon shifting the existing applications to other radio frequency bands. (January 25, 2012) [www.cellular-news.com](http://www.cellular-news.com)

ANCOM has confirmed that mobile operators Orange Romania and Vodafone Romania will have their 900MHz/1800MHz UMTS concessions extended until December 31, 2012, bringing to an end months of speculation. However, both cellcos are obliged to pay the state a supplementary license fee of EUR6.4 million (US\$8.3 million) for 2012 – an amount proportional to the overall fee originally paid by each operator in 1996. The telecoms watchdog has decided to auction off all available radio frequencies in the aforementioned spectrum bands in 2012, with a view to regulating the distribution of frequencies in both bands in January 2013. (January 3, 2012) [www.telegeography.com](http://www.telegeography.com)

## Uganda

The Communication Commission (UCC) will meet with representatives from the nation's telecoms operators to discuss deteriorating service quality. On the agenda are infrastructure-based issues such as service interruptions and network failures, as well as more customer-oriented problems, including ambiguous charges on bills and irregularities with mobile money services. A UCC quality of service (QoS) survey carried out between May and September last year showed that of the five cellcos examined, all dropped more than 2% of calls, and three – MTN Uganda, Airtel Uganda and Uganda Telecom – blocked more than 10% of calls. During the UCC's previous QoS survey, in December 2010, Warid Telecom performed the worst of all the country's telcos; the most recent analysis indicated significant improvement from the UAE-backed company, reducing the proportion of blocked calls from 25.8% to 8.8% whilst dropped calls were reduced from 8.0% to 4.2%. (January 30, 2012) [Daily Monitor](http://Daily Monitor)

## Australia

The Communications Minister is asking Telstra and Vodafone to pay a combined AU\$1.4 billion (US\$1.43 billion) to renew their existing 800MHz spectrum licenses. The licenses expire at the end of 2013, and if the networks refuse to pay the fee they could be put up for auction. The Minister made the demand in a response to a consultation on the licenses. Under the proposal, Telstra will have to pay US\$758 million to renew its license and Vodafone about US\$678 million. The government is aiming to earn AU\$4 billion in 2012-13 from the sale of radio spectrum, including a 700MHz digital dividend action. Industry sources told that Senator Conroy's demand came after negotiations broke down between Telstra and the government. A deal was said to be close when Telstra balked at paying the price the department demanded, on advice from the Department of Finance. The consultation on reissue of expiring 15-year spectrum licenses closes on January 16. (January 3, 2012)

[Australian Financial Review](#)

## Hong Kong

Office of the Telecommunications Authority (OFTA) has announced four bidders in its auction of spectrum in the 2.3GHz band for the provision of broadband wireless access services. The applicants are: China Mobile Hong Kong, Hong Kong Telecommunications (HKT) Limited (PCCW), Hutchison Telephone Company (3) and 21 ViaNet Group Limited. Bidding alongside three long-established mobile operators in Hong Kong – PCCW, 3 and China Mobile – 21 Vianet Group (formerly AsiaCloud) is a carrier-neutral internet data centre services provider with branches across mainland China. (January 11, 2012)

[www.telegeography.com](#)

OFTA has issued a consultation paper on its proposals for releasing a total of 50MHz of paired spectrum in the 2500MHz–2690MHz band, including 15MHz left over from a 2009 wireless broadband license auction via which four mobile operators obtained frequencies for Long Term Evolution (LTE) services. OFTA believes that there will be competing demands for the bandwidth and therefore proposes an auction process, and to divide the available spectrum into five frequency bands, each with a bandwidth of 2×5MHz, on a technology-neutral basis, with no spectrum cap, under 15-year licenses. The regulator proposes to require each successful bidder to roll out its network with a minimum coverage of 50% of the population as regards mobile services, or, alternatively a minimum coverage of 200 commercial and/or residential buildings if launching fixed services, within five years from the issue of the license. Comments on the consultation paper are invited until 29 February 2012. (January 3, 2012) [www.telegeography.com](#)

## Taiwan

As per data from the National Communications Commission (NCC) Taiwan ended November with 131,000 Wimax subscribers, up 84.5% from June 2011. Of the six Wimax operators, Global Mobile accounted for two-thirds

of the Wimax subscribers and the company said earlier it aims to attract a total of 250,000 subscribers by the second half of 2012. Revenues generated from Wimax totaled TWD 194 million in the first eleven months of last year. (January 10, 2012) [www.telecompaper.com](#)

## Thailand

The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) may grant more MVNO licenses as it appears this is allowed under the new Frequency Allocation law. The subcommittee of the NBTC assigned to study the impacts of the 2010 Frequency Allocation Law on MVNOs believes the law is aimed at preventing other parties of taking control of spectrum. However, MVNOs do not control spectrum, they only provide services using the spectrum of a network operator. However, the subcommittee has yet to finish its investigation into the 3G resale deals between CAT Telecom and True group. The NBTC's predecessor, the NTC, granted seventeen MVNO licenses before suspending the process when the new frequency law took effect over concerns MVNOs may not be allowed under the new law. Of the seventeen license holders, five are actively providing services using TOT's network. Meanwhile, the Bangkok Post writes that two European mobile operators have expressed interest in providing services in Thailand as MVNOs over TOT's network. TOT chairman Panthep Chamrasromran said one of the companies is headquartered in Norway and both companies will seek local partners to sell 3G services. (January 30, 2012) [www.telecompaper.com](#)

NBTC has imposed stricter service quality standards for all Thai telecoms operators, with immediate effect, with the aim of avoiding network service disruptions. The new rules, covering 50 or so existing operators, were prompted by users of cellco Digital Total Access Communication (DTAC) suffering four network outages in one month, reportedly caused by technology upgrades. All operators must alert customers when networks go down for 30 minutes or more, while service quality must now be monitored more frequently than the previous obligatory checks every three months. Penalties for non-compliance range from warnings to fines, to license revocation. (January 18, 2012) [The Bangkok Post](#)

## India

Latest figures from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) stated that the total number of mobile phone subscribers in India reached 884.37 million at the end of November 2011, with Tata Teleservices losing 4.4 million subscribers in the same month. According to the TRAI figures, the total wireless subscriber base increased by 0.34% (2.97 million) from 881.40 million in October 2011 to 884.37 million at the end of November 2011. The wireline subscriber base declined from 33.19 million in October to 32.96 million at the end of November 2011. The total number of telephone subscribers increased by 0.30% from 914.59 million at the end of October 2011 to 917.33 million

at the end of November 2011. The tele-density in the country climbed to 76.18 in November from 76.03 the previous month. The latest figures further reveal that out of the total 884.37 million subscribers, 635.39 million were active on the date of peak visitor location register (VLR) for the month of November 2011. Idea Cellular added the highest number of subscribers in the month of November. With an overall base of 103.9 million at the end of November, the operator added 2.17 million new users during the month. Uninor, whose total subscriber base stood at 34.1 million at the end of November 2011, added 1.86 million in the month. Airtel added 0.96 million subscribers in November, taking its total subscriber base to 174.6 million. Tata Teleservices lost 4.4 million subscribers in the month of November and its user base stood at 83.3 million. Mobile number portability (MNP) requests for the year so far were at 25.8 million in November 2011. In November alone, 2.6 million requests were made for MNP. The TRAI figures also state that broadband subscription reached 13.13 million in November 2011, up from 12.98 million in the previous month. (January 10, 2012) [www.rcrwireless.com](http://www.rcrwireless.com)

India's Department of Telecoms (DoT) plans to impose fines totaling Rs 1,594 crore (US\$293.7 million) on five mobile network operators, after it accused them of understating revenues and hence paying lower revenue shares to the government during 2006-08. The decision stems from an independent audit of the company accounts requested by the government in 2009 to verify that the reported revenues matched the actual figures earned by the networks. The networks pay a percentage of their revenues which varies between 8-16% to the government for their operating license. The expected fines will be as follows:

- Reliance Communications - Rs 551 crore
- Bharti Airtel - Rs 292 crore
- Vodafone - Rs 254 crore
- Idea Cellular - Rs 113 crore
- Tata Teleservices - Rs 273 crore
- Tata Communications - Rs 120 crore

The networks are expected to reject the findings of the auditors and appeal against the penalties. (January 4, 2012) **The Economic Times**

India's Department of Telecom (DoT) has accused the mobile networks of suppressing important documents in their dispute over the planned ban on 3G roaming between networks. Filing an affidavit before the dispute adjudicator, TDSAT, the DoT requested the tribunal to dismiss the mobile networks petition to overturn the government's ruling that 3g Roaming is illegal. The networks need to allow roaming where they lack licenses in order to provide nationwide coverage, and claim that they were informed that this would be allowed before the 3G auction took place. The government disputes their interpretation and is seeking to ban inter-circle roaming by the License holders. The DoT said the 3G roaming pact by operators is "in violation of various terms and conditions of Cellular Mobile Telecom Service License and various terms and conditions of the Notice Inviting Applications (NIA) dated 25.02.2010 for 3G/BWA Auction". The DOT issued an order banning the roaming deals, and the networks, Bharti, Vodafone, Idea, Airtel and Tatas appealed to the adjudicator. (January 2, 2012) **The Hindu Business Line**

**Javaid Akhtar Malik**  
 Director Regulatory Affairs  
 SAMENA Telecommunications Council



## TOP TECHNOLOGY UPDATES

### Hutchison 3G Austria Deploys HP Home Subscriber Server

Communications service provider (CSP) Hutchison 3G (H3G) Austria has deployed HP Home Subscriber Server (HSS) as the core of a new, long-term evolution (LTE) network that will bring much faster speeds and a better mobile internet experience to its 1.2m customers. The HP HSS is the primary repository of information on all customers, including their personal profiles and the mobile services they use and will help the CSP manage network usage by controlling access, authentication and authorization for every user on the network. Under the LTE project, HP provides H3G Austria with additional offerings which include: intelligent network services on the same service platform; HP AAA (authentication, authorization and accounting) to streamline service provisioning; HP Internet Usage Manager for improved session management; HP BSS (business support systems) for better fraud management and revenue assurance; and HP Integration services for inter-carrier billing, mediation and order management. Using HP NonStop server technology, the HP HSS is collocated with the HP HLR, so subscriber data is managed as a single logical record.

### Japan's eAccess LTE Network Gets 300Mbps Download Speeds in Testing

Japanese broadband company eAccess has completed testing of its LTE mobile network, reaching download speeds of 300Mbps. The 4G LTE network will be the second to launch in Japan, behind NTT DoCoMo. However, this test speed dwarfs that of DoCoMo or anything found in the US, including Verizon's theoretical 100Mbps download speed. Because of the technical challenges in designing the network, users probably won't be using the network on their smartphones — the four LTE antennas required would take up too much space and drain battery quickly. However, users of tablets or other larger devices could see some major improvements over the current eAccess HSPA+ network. That 300Mbps test speed, of course, won't be what customers get when the service launches in March. The actual numbers will be closer to 75Mbps for downloads and 25Mbps for uploads, still blazing fast even compared to wired broadband speeds. According to GigaOm, the network uses too much spectrum to make it feasible on crowded US airwaves, so we Americans will have to wait for LTE-Advanced in 2013 to get speeds like this on our mobile devices.

## US Cellular to Launch LTE Services in March 2012

Wireless carrier US Cellular announced that its 4G LTE network will be up and running next month in six states. The company's first LTE device will be the Samsung Galaxy Tab 10.1 4G LTE tablet, followed by the Samsung Galaxy S Aviator 4G LTE smartphone, which will hit stores sometime in April, US Cellular said. The March rollout will happen in select cities in Iowa, Wisconsin, Maine, North Carolina, Texas, and Oklahoma, including Milwaukee, Madison and Racine, Wis.; Des Moines, Cedar Rapids and Davenport, Iowa; Portland and Bangor, Maine; and Greenville, N.C. The network will bring download speeds that are up to 10 times faster than 3G and are similar to a cable Internet connection, US Cellular said. Such speeds allow users to begin watching a movie in seconds and provide smoother video streaming with little or no buffering. "With 4G LTE speeds, you can quickly get what you want when you need it," Mary Dillon, president and CEO of US Cellular, said in a statement.

## Clearwire Releases New WiMAX Hotspot Devices

Clearwire announced two new hotspot products to go with the network that is on its way out. The Clear Hub Express is a combination WiMAX hotspot and WiFi router to enable easy connections for homes and offices. It costs US\$99. The other new product is the US\$124 Clear Spot Voyager, which link up to eight devices with WiMAX. It has six hours of battery life. Sprint said last month that it would no longer support WiMAX in new devices, sending the message that it is all about LTE from now on. Clearwire's move is a reminder that the LTE migration may not exactly happen overnight. It also might be encouraging for current WiMAX customers to hear that they still have choices for new devices, even though WiMAX future is limited. Whether or not they feel the current WiMAX network is worth continuing to buy new devices for is a whole other story.

## Sumitomo Develops Remote Radio Head for TD-LTE Networks

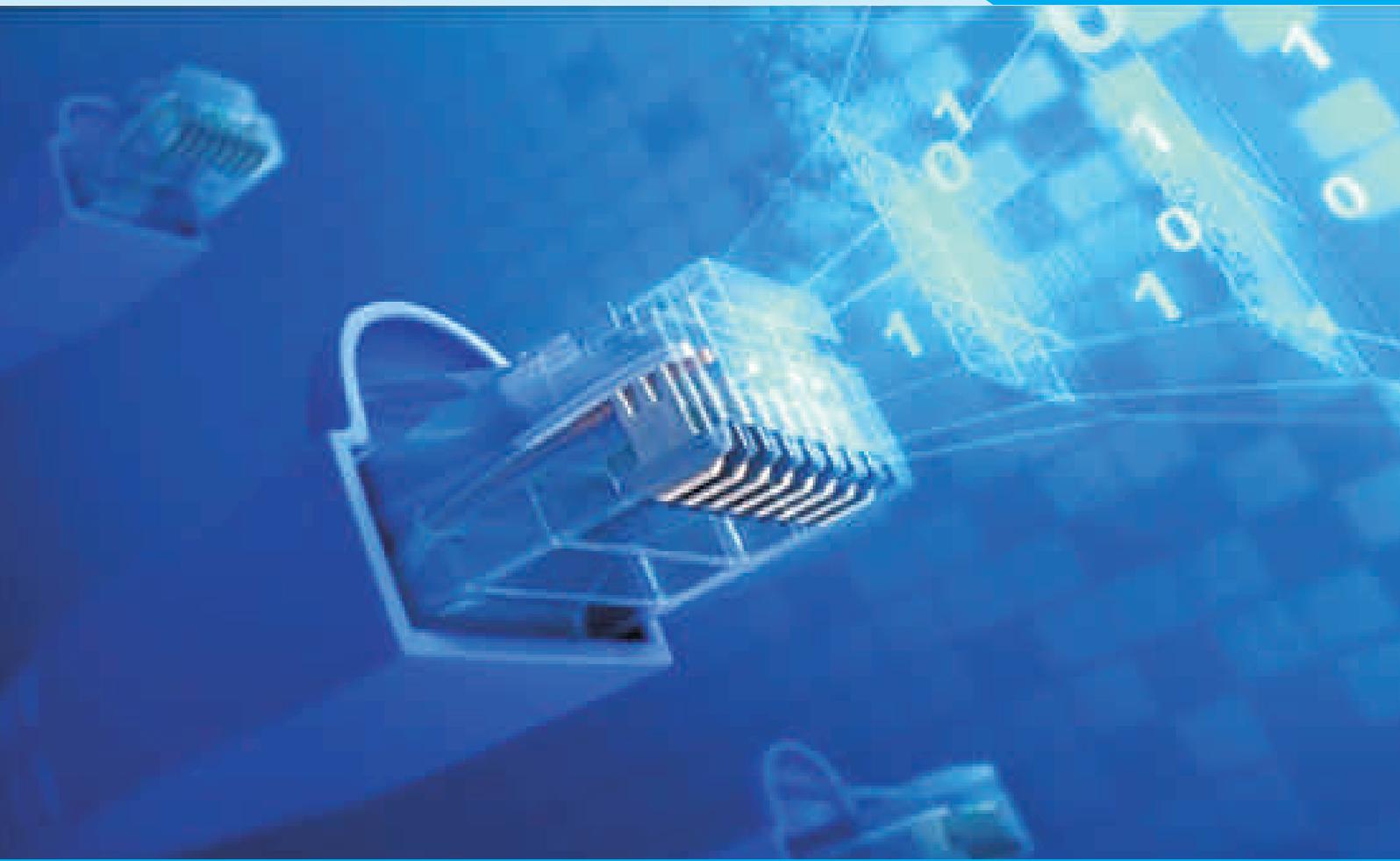
Japanese company Sumitomo Electric Industries has introduced the TRU2640, its advanced remote radio head (RRH) designed for use in TD-LTE networks, following the release of the FRU2180 for FDD LTE networks in June 2011. The TRU2640 has a high power efficiency of 20 percent and operates in the 2.6 GHz band, the most commonly used band for TD-LTE systems. Available in 2x2, 2x4, 4x4 and 4x2 configurations, the TRU2640 meets and exceeds all specification requirements contained in the 3GPP standards. The TRU2640 also offers optional support for multi-carrier operation, which enables operators to expand capacity in the future. Supporting a standard Common Public Radio Interface (CPRI), this RRH offers a blend of standards implementation and industry leading performance.

## Global Capital Spending on LTE to Reach US\$24.3 Billion in 2013

Global capital spending on the wireless technology 4G Long Term Evolution (LTE) is projected to reach US\$24.3bn in 2013, nearly triple the US\$8.7bn of 2012, as mobile carriers definitively migrate to the next-generation standard, according to a new report from IHS. Report further said that the LTE infrastructure spending in 2015 will rise to US\$36.1bn, compared to just US\$9bn for 3.5G. In 2013, 3.5G infrastructure technology will generate US\$19.8bn in revenue, and is expected to be overtaken by LTE due to the rapid growth. IHS director and principal analyst for communications and consumer electronics research said that the number of mobile network operators that are trialing, deploying or commercially operating 4G LTE networks now has grown to about 200 worldwide, up from 160 in 2010. And such widespread support will drive carrier spending on LTE to surpass 3.5G by next year. According to the report, the 4G networks of the future must evolve to more heterogeneous architectures such as metro cells, which will be used to augment coverage or fill holes in areas of high data traffic and used alongside Wi-Fi hotspots to provide coverage in public spaces.

## Global 3G Subscribers Pass One Billion

The UMTS Forum has confirmed that global connections to the 3GPP family of networks - WCDMA, HSPA/HSPA+ and LTE - has hit ten figures. The figure also includes around 50 million subscriptions to China's TD-SCDMA networks and 225 million CDMA2000 1xEV-DO subscribers, mainly in Asia and North America. It's a major milestone and one that coincides with a huge surge in demand for data services on mobile. Commercial LTE deployments now number almost 50, with over 150 operators committed to launch the technology. There are currently nearly 10m LTE subscribers. "The commercial success of 3G around the world is unarguable, with 3GPP/UMTS as the leading standard", said UMTS Forum chairman Jean-Pierre Bienaimé. Capitalizing on that success, 3GPP/LTE will become the global wireless standard, around which current mobile technologies will converge for the benefits of customers in terms of roaming, interoperability, and a seamless mobile broadband experience.



## NATIONAL BROADBAND NETWORK DEVELOPMENT: FOR AN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP.

**Mr. Osama Ghoul**  
Managing Director  
Devoteam



20 years after its creation, Devoteam Group has become the number one consultancy company in information technologies in Europe, Middle East and North Africa, specializing in information systems infrastructures. Combining consulting & technology solutions offers enables Devoteam to provide its customers with independent advice and effective solutions that meet their strategic objectives (IT performance and optimization) in complementary areas: network, systems infrastructure, security and e-business applications.

Many agree that high speed broadband networks are important and vital for the economic development. Indeed, over the last decade, a number of developed and emergent

economies have drawn up broadband strategies to bridge the gap in supply in this domain. However, despite many reforms in the telecommunications sector conducted in a majority of countries and despite the impressive development of the Telco industry, much of the developed countries' population don't have access to ultra-fast broadband infrastructure and few of the population in the emergent countries have access to high speed broadband services.

Development of fiber infrastructure to the home/ building has encountered major barriers such as the level of investment required in particular in remote areas-, competition of legacy technologies (mostly DSL), lack of national coordination, and low government incentives.

*Regulators and governments, realizing the importance of “enabling” the development of such infrastructures on the long term*

Regulators and governments, realizing the importance of “enabling” the development of such infrastructures on the long term, are today considering different tools to promote the delivery of broadband infrastructure, enhance customer's experience with multimedia and next generation services, and increase the penetration rate. Devoteam, through recent engagements for similar developments, has identified three main approaches which are outlined below:

1. Infrastructure sharing regulations and incentives: After the introduction and promotion of facility-based competition and strong push towards investment in infrastructure, regulators are considering more service-based competition and fostering passive and / or active infrastructure sharing strategies. The resulting decrease of capital and operating expenditures will help service providers to focus on investing in innovative services bringing higher benefit to customers. The infrastructure sharing policy should be established through a clear framework taking into account fair competition, protection of existing or planned investments, wholesale model licensing (e.g. utilities companies) and lowering barriers for new entrants (end-users providers). Although beneficial for new entrants, the infrastructure sharing has proved so far that in most of the cases it does not go beyond sharing the passive infrastructure and does not lead to the expected benefits for the market (higher competition and penetration rate, better coverage) and end-users (lower prices, better customer's experience).
2. Pure Public funding, where the government gets involved directly in building and operating a new access infrastructure. Today, and especially with the current economic downturn, the delivery of a national broadband network is costly, cash intensive, and takes time (variable depending on the country geography). Moreover, having a Government funded /operated infrastructure company competing with the private sector would false the competition and prevent the private facility-based companies from obtaining a reasonable return on investment.

3. Public-Private-Partnership: The cost and long timeframe of new government-funded deployment is the main reason why governments and regulators in both developed and developing countries are seeking a close cooperation with the private sector for the delivery of such challenging strategy. By extending rather than duplicating the existing infrastructure, such PPP collaboration will decrease the deployment timeframe and focus will be directed into areas the private sector cannot primarily address.

The PPP is a combination of both infrastructure sharing and government funding. Such partnership will significantly reduce the investment expenditure for both the communication service providers and the government. In general, the PPP is expected to encourage all facility-based owners to take part of partnership. Therefore, incorporating part or all of the existing infrastructure (Telecom incumbent and utilities companies), will ensure an efficient delivery of the broadband strategy (The Singapore and Australia initiatives are good examples for a best practice PPP in telecommunications). Also, PPP projects will help introducing at a large scale the service-based competition which drives the telecommunications sector development especially in the emergent markets, thus improve customers' experience and ensure affordable access to the community.

Possible approaches and models to build the PPP project have to be carefully assessed by the regulator, including financial, governance, and stakeholders contribution aspects in particular with regards to the implication of the incumbent in such project. Also, potential concerns with PPP such as market distortion, anti-competition should be addressed at the earliest stage of the PPP project definition. Particular regulatory provisions should be introduced to ensure the open and fair access nature of the network.

*The PPP is a combination of both infrastructure sharing and government funding. Such partnership will significantly reduce the investment expenditure for both the communication service providers and the government*



## TAKING THE LEAP FROM SOCIAL MEDIA TO SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Social media has forever changed how customers and companies interact. Companies are eager to embrace social media, but they rarely take the time to set a well-thought-out social media strategy. This limits the opportunities they capture, and it can also be damaging to their brands. To maximize return on investment from social media, companies need a customer-centric social engagement strategy, embedded in a holistic digital customer agenda, and aligned with overall corporate and marketing objectives.

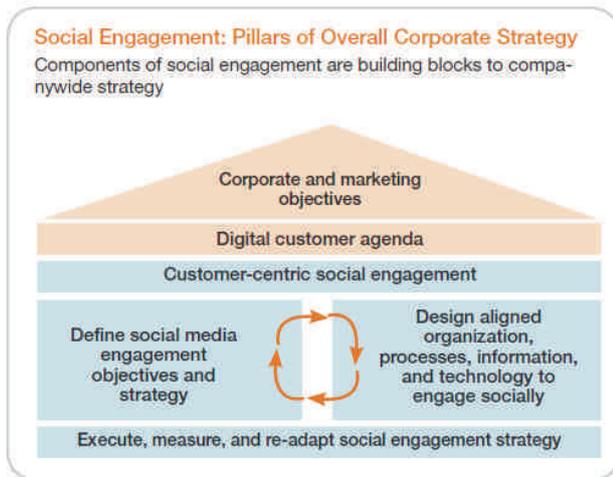
Additionally, companies must realize that customers use social media predominantly to engage in interactive one-to-one conversations. Businesses that use social media efforts only for advertising or sales will find lackluster results. The lure of social media opportunities should not overshadow the risks and effort that is required to properly plan and manage corporate social media engagement.

### Social media opportunities and risks

There are many opportunities for telecom, Internet, and media (TIME) companies to develop a unique approach to social media engagement with customers. Just by listening, these firms can capture customer insight and competitive intelligence. For example, network security firm Symantec

*Instead of a standalone social media strategy, companies must develop a customer-centric social engagement strategy that is aligned with overall corporate and marketing objectives.*

uses social media to drive positive customer product ratings through its "Social @Symantec" microsite, which features interactive forums, as well as its Twitter and Facebook pages. Additionally, about 10,000 customers participate in Symantec's "Norton Brand Advocates" program; these customers have created more than 1,000 reviews and testimonials, as well as shared more than 2,500 offers with friends and colleagues. Symantec tracks and analyzes those comments, as well as product reviews on e-commerce and



specialized websites, and then integrates its findings into its email campaigns. This has contributed to increased online sales on Amazon.com by \$26 million.

Other players across TIME industries focus on increasing customer satisfaction and driving support costs down through social care. For example, Apple encourages customers to assist one another in its own support communities; others such as HP and AT&T use Facebook support forums to quickly respond to customers. Yet social media activity is not without risk. It offers detractors a loudspeaker to voice their complaints and vent their frustrations, so companies should be prepared to respond quickly. Additionally, companies must maintain their presence in social channels and ensure that conversations are consistent and move across channels.

### Customer-centric social engagement

To maximize their return on investment from social media, companies must avoid the false lure of “me too” engagement in social media activities with no clear objective, end-to-end strategy, governance model, or technology to support it. It is imperative that they take the time to develop a customer-centric social engagement strategy, which is made up of three components:

1. Define social media engagement objectives and strategy
2. Align the organization, processes, information, and technology
3. Execute, measure, and refine your customer-centric social engagement strategy

#### 1. Define social media engagement objectives and strategy

Customer and company objectives are not always in sync. So TIME companies first need to identify and differentiate their current and prospective digital customers, at a minimum by their needs from and expectations of social media. Second, they should clearly define their own social media objectives. Third, they need to design a strategy that helps them achieve their ambitions while catering to

customer needs. Finally, it's essential to define specific metrics to assess the return on investment from social engagement.

#### 2. Align the organization, processes, information, and technology

Business leaders need to determine how they're going to structure their company's social engagement governance structure. There are various models, each with its own advantages and drawbacks. For example, a centralized model can ensure that there is full alignment on all social engagement activities. More decentralized structures (e.g., organic, hub-and-spoke) can be less effective on alignment, but can better engage the entire organization and drive social engagement innovation.

**Organization:** Truly effective social media initiatives require dedicated resources. Personnel should include representatives from key departments, such as marketing, customer service, corporate communications, and others functions that fall within the scope of the target social media strategy. Companies should train their employees on how best to engage in positive online conversations with customers. Employee empowerment is essential to the success of these efforts. All of this requires support from top management, otherwise cross-organizational alignment and effectiveness will be difficult to achieve.

**Process:** Senior leadership must determine key processes and SLAs, such as how best to monitor social commentary, disseminate insights to key decision-makers, and address potential action steps. However, it's critical that these processes remain flexible in order to cope with the rapidly

*With a sound social engagement strategy in place, the company executed various campaigns to test the impact of social engagement on customer acquisition*

evolving nature of social media platforms.

**Information:** Data captured from social media initiatives should be transferred to other departments through a structured data flow. Companies should collect social data on an ongoing basis, and then use that information to help define, adjust, and leverage their actions in the social media space and elsewhere.

**Technology:** Technology plays an important role in supporting social media initiatives, in large part because interaction speed is imperative. Companies should leverage

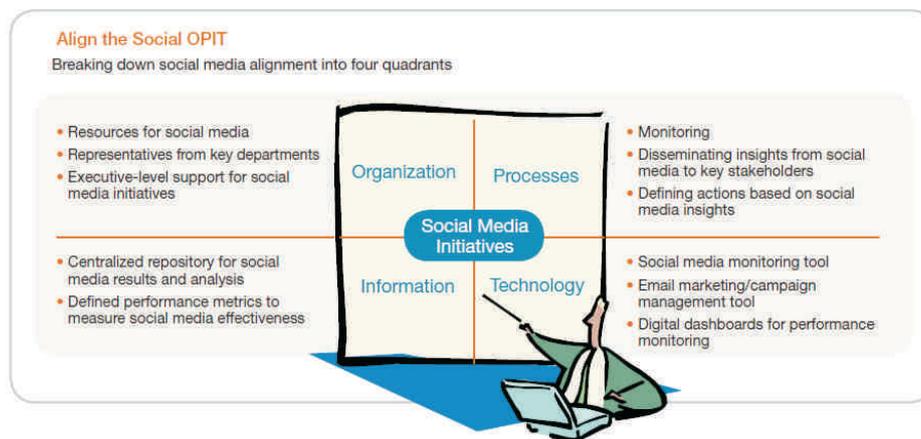
social media monitoring tools, as well as platforms for online communities and digital dashboards for performance monitoring. Other systems include marketing and campaign management software and self-service tools.

### 3. Execute, measure, and refine your customer-centric social engagement strategy

Executing a customer-centric social engagement strategy requires learning and adapting. Social media is rapidly evolving, and so is customer behavior. For this reason program pilots are important, as long as they are well managed and map to a specific objective. Each program's impact will vary by objective, company type, and customer demands.

project team defined plans to establish a new presence on other social networks, like Flickr and geography-based social networking sites. The strategy focused developing social media applications that would linked directly to information on the operator's products and services. The telecom promoted newly created content, mainly through social media links and widgets on the corporate website and across all related company micro-sites.

The company created a Digital Value Management unit in charge of coordinating and managing all online execution and social media engagement initiatives, including marketing and customer care. The team defined key performance indicators and built a social engagement



As platforms like Facebook continues to grow with new products, other platforms, like Google Buzz, are shutting down. Consequently, companies should revisit their social engagement strategy every six months with an update every quarter to check results against performance metrics. Companies cannot really know whether or how best to change their strategy unless they measure its performance on an ongoing basis. Each objective should have specific metrics attached to it. For example, if the objective is to measure awareness, then number of unique visitors and click-through rates may be good measures. Conversely, if the objective is to generate new product ideas from customers, then the number of valid ideas and their impact on product sales versus original launch targets is what the company should measure. Each company needs to align social engagement metrics to its overall business goals.

### Bringing social engagement to digital customers

In 2011 Peppers & Rogers Group helped a major telecommunications operator create a digital customer agenda. This included producing a customer-centric social media engagement strategy. The project consisted of two components: define customer-centric objectives and strategy, and then design a plan to execute the strategy. The project included reviewing and revamping all of the telecom's existing social media presences, including Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn profiles. Additionally, the

dashboard to monitor both campaign and employee performance for continuous learning and improvement.

With a sound social engagement strategy in place, the company executed various campaigns to test the impact of social engagement on customer acquisition. In the case of one product, Facebook campaigns resulted in a 184 percent increase in the number of fans of that product and a 5 percent increase in Internet traffic in less than two weeks.

### The future

It's difficult to guess where social media will go. However, what we do know is that companies should avoid broad, unstructured initiatives. Programs with no clear vision or return on investment may create detractors rather than followers and advocates. It's imperative to put a dynamic, long-term plan in place for sustained customer-centric social engagement. That plan must be part and parcel of a broader digital customer agenda and in line with the company's overall corporate and marketing objectives.

**Adham Fahmi**  
Manager  
**Mohamad Ghalayini**  
Consultant  
Peppers & Rogers Group



## BROADBAND: THE ENABLER OF SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT & ECONOMIC GROWTH

### Mr. Bocar A. BA

President

SAMENA Telecommunications Council

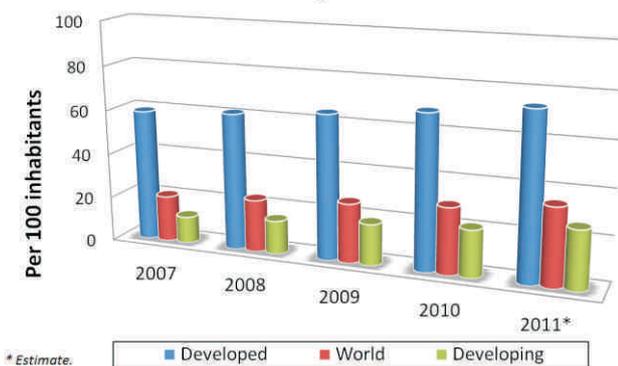


Broadband is driving business ventures that will revolutionize education, healthcare, agriculture, energy management, and public safety, while creating tangible business prospects in the overall global development. Over the recent past, the overall development in broadband has been significant. However, we are far from having achieved reasonable broadband coverage around the world. The African continent is just one example of a region where existing broadband coverage is most minimal. In fact, in Africa, even the very existence of the Internet in many potential market segments can be debated.

With the advent of convergence of technologies and systems, the broadband Internet sector is evolving at a

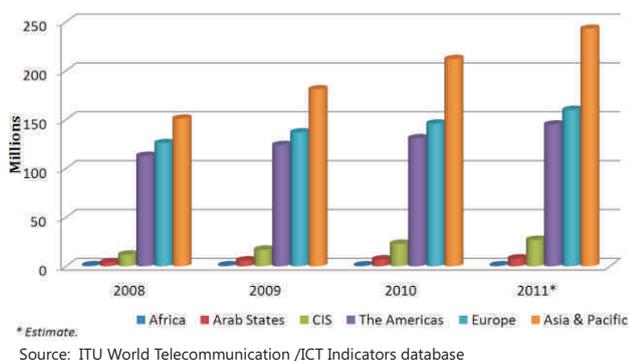
remarkable pace. As a consequence, such market dynamics are impacting the dynamics of our own lives; how knowledge is created and spread; how economic activities are kindled; how human interaction in modern times is achieved; and business conduct themselves with other businesses. The Internet, a medium and a critical resource that is now the object of much industry-wide discussion around the globe, has now become one of the human society's most valuable assets. The Internet has been evolving, expanding, and creating retrospectively unimaginable opportunities and options for human communication and growth. However, the Internet's sustainability and rate of expansion are now a function of broadband growth.

Internet users per 100 inhabitants



Broadband is fundamental to the creation of knowledge economies. Furthermore, it is increasingly becoming a catalyst for the initiation of national disaster recovery programs.

Fixed (Wired) Broadband Subscriptions



Broadband has become an important factor for structural changes in the economy for enabling technologies, not only by having a direct impact on the product grown but also by enhancing the competition. Broadband and ICT are aiding the globalization of many services, making it convenient for

*With the advent of convergence of technologies and systems, the broadband Internet sector is evolving at a remarkable pace*

the customers and operators to be in different locations with the help of broadband. Examples of ICT-enabled services include accounting, design, R&D, technical testing and analysis services, marketing and advertising, management consultancy, and human resource management. ICT enabled globalization is having a key impact on the economies and the allocation of global resources.

Broadband proliferation has proven itself as a major enabler of economic progress for countries around the world. It is for this reason that numerous countries have either developed or are developing national digital plans and broadband proliferation frameworks.

The governments' involvement in initiating, actively participating in, and facilitating broadband expansion has multiple dimensions. That is, the governments can develop better macro-economic structures to aid better economic participation from the masses by promotion and tangibly facilitating broadband investments. As policy-makers and regulators, they can create environments most conducive to free-market participation and activity by telecom operators and internet service providers. Lastly, as signatories to emerging international treaties, such as the upcoming International Telecommunications Regulations treaty 2012, the governments can display openness to and inclination toward attending to investor's viewpoints and needs.



## SATELLITE NEWS

### **Romantis Provides Turnkey Satellite Telemedicine Network to All-Russian Center**

Romantis has announced the successful implementation of the state project on delivery of communication, management and interaction systems to connect the Regional Centers for Disaster Medicine (RCDM) of the Russian Federation with the unified national system of prevention and liquidation of emergency situations. Romantis supplied 12 telemedicine complexes to the Regional Centers for Disaster Medicine, including UHP VSAT equipment, multi-point videoconferencing systems, mobile communication and telemedicine systems, as well as completed work on delivery, installation, commissioning of equipment and training of personnel. The project is the next step in the plan to develop a satellite telecommunication network for All-Russian Center for Disaster Medicine Zashchita, which now has global reach of the Russian Federation providing support to medical specialists working in the field and coordination of first aid during disasters and accidents. The network operates via the satellite capacity provided by Romantis and supports voice and data transmission, including protected medical information, as well as videoconferencing.

### **Thaicom to Launch Two More Satellites**

Thailand-based satellite services provider Thaicom is planning to launch two new commercial satellites labeled Thaicom 8 and Thaicom 9. Thaicom hopes to return to profitability after a few years of losses. The 41%-owned satellite subsidiary of InTouch Plc, formerly named Shin Corp and founded by fugitive former premier Thaksin Shinawatra, is also on the verge of changing its 20-year-old commercial logo next month, using InTouch's logo. Thaicom 8, also known as iPSTAR 2, will be launched by 2014 or 2015 when utilisation of the existing iPSTAR satellite rises to 40-50% of total capacity, up from 25% currently. Thaicom 9 will be positioned at 50.5 degrees east to reserve the country's orbital slot, due to expire in November. It will be a broadcast satellite and the company aims to expand its footprint in the Middle East, Europe and Africa. Thaicom 8 broadband satellite, to be positioned in the orbital slot at 119.5 degrees, will cost no more than US\$200 million. The satellite will serve the anticipated increase in broadband demand.

## DubaiSat-2 Model Passes Testing Phase

The Emirates Institution for Advanced Science & Technology (EIAST) said the third model for the DubaiSat-2 remote sensing satellite has passed a series of rigorous tests. The satellite is due for launch into orbit by the end of 2012. Tests included vibration testing, acoustic testing, thermal testing, thermal vacuum testing, a shock test and mass measurement. The next step for the engineers is a single final verification of the data from the electronic components before a meeting at the end of February to review the data and confirm that the project is ready to enter the manufacturing stage. The satellite will orbit 600 kilometers above the earth's surface compared with the 690 km orbit of DubaiSat-1. The orbit has also been changed from an ascending orbit (South to North) to a descending orbit (North to South), so both satellites work together to give better coverage of the UAE area.

## Du Pont Telecom Launches Satellite Broadband Service

Du Pont Telecom has launched Bizsat a broadband satellite-based product offering businesses throughout sub-Saharan Africa robust, fast, affordable, all-in-one telephony and internet connectivity. BizSat is powered by Skyevine, a joint venture company between Ellies and Q-KON, and delivers coverage throughout sub-Saharan Africa without the need for supporting copper, fiber, cellular or DECT infrastructure. The only additional equipment needed - apart from that required for any conventional broadband Internet connectivity or VoIP telephony solution - is a one-meter satellite dish. With no terrestrial infrastructure that can be compromised, the system is immune to cable and copper theft. Once Du Pont BizSat is installed, its performance is similar to that offered by terrestrial alternatives delivering bandwidth speeds of 256/4096 kbps for upload/download.

## Infrasat to Expand Liga-Liga Rural Telephony Services

The Angolan satellite telecommunications system Infracat intends to expand the rural "Liga-Liga" telephony services in the first half of 2012. The move will mark the reactivation up to 600 antennas or telecentres according to executive director of the institution. Under the expansion of rural telephony service, the company intends to install antennas or telecentres in various public institutions, especially in schools, prisons and according to the requests of people. Infracat also has the intention to recover the telecentres or antennas which were vandalized during the period when they had stopped giving services in several provinces. INFRASAT will need an additional fund worth US\$ 2 million in order to allow the purpose of recovery of all these telecentres.

## SpaceX to Launch Asiasat 6 and Asiasat 8

Space Exploration Technologies (SpaceX) and Asia Satellite Telecommunications Company Limited (AsiaSat) announced an agreement to launch two AsiaSat communications satellites using SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket in 2014, after the previous two AsiaSats were launched via the Russian Proton rocket, under the control of International Launch Services (ILS). AsiaSat 6 and AsiaSat 8 are scheduled to launch in the first half of 2014 from SpaceX's launch complex at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida, USA. AsiaSat 6 will have 28 high-powered C-band transponders while AsiaSat 8 will have 24 Ku-band transponders and a Ka-band beam. The high-powered transponders on the satellite will enable the use of small antennas on the ground. The two SS/L 1300 satellites will serve Asia, the Middle East and Australasia.

## First Bangladeshi Satellite Project on Roll

The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has started work to set up an office for consultants of a project to send the country's first satellite, Bangabandhu-1, into the orbit. Selection of a consulting company has already been completed and a deal would be struck with US-based Space Partnership International (SPI) within the current month. The initiative has been taken as part of implementing the idea of building 'Digital Bangladesh'. This project has been started to realize the dream of sending a satellite into the orbit. Currently, the country's satellite TV channels, internet service providers, V-Sat and radio stations are providing their services by renting foreign satellites. Each TV channel is paying US\$0.2 million per year by way of rent. Altogether, 19 TV channels and other firms are paying around US\$4 million per year.

## China to Launch Bolivian Satellite Tupac Katari In 2013

China will put Bolivia's first telecommunications satellite into orbit in December 2013. The manufacturing process of the satellite had been completed in China, and technicians from both countries are working on the final design, which is expected to be finished by March 2013. The Tupac Katari satellite will be launched from the southwest Xichang Satellite Launch Center in China. The satellite agreement was signed between the Bolivian Space Agency and the Great Wall Industry Corporation of China, a subsidiary of the Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation of China in December 2010. Bolivia plans to invest nearly US\$ 300 million in the Tupac Katari project, of which 45 million will come from the General Treasury of Bolivia and the other 250 million as a loan from the Development Bank of China.



# ROAMING NEWS

## Roaming Call-Back Operator Launches Call-Through Services

Cloud9 Mobile has announced that they have launched Low Cost Roaming via Call-Through, not just in EU but with all Camel supported networks globally. Previously being pioneers in Call-Back technology, they used this to minimize IOT charges for outbound roaming costs. Now subscribers can dial as with their normal mobile service when roaming and still make substantial savings. The Call-Through set up with Cloud9 offers very competitive rates for calling within the EU, but when traveling throughout the rest of the world they can still force a Call-Back by adding # after the international number. This offers very low rates in comparison to roaming with a regular SIM card. The Cloud9 Roaming Hub offers the Resellers instant roaming agreements with over 560 Mobile Network Operators in over 200 countries. This global coverage is typically 25 percent higher than the large UK MNOs. One SIM card offers global coverage for voice, SMS and data, as well as using Multi-IMSI technology for local call costs in countries such as the US. The company claims that they offer wholesale roaming data in the US for as little as US\$0.09 per MB.

## JojoTalk Launches Pocket WiFi Device Rentals

JojoTalk has announced the release of a new pocket-sized WiFi device that will help international travelers stay connected with their family and friends while on the go. A pocket WiFi is an affordable option for travelers who want to keep in touch with loved ones by email while traveling abroad. JojoTalk also offers an array of smartphones and mobile phones for customers who rent international cell phones for business trips or international vacations. In addition to the new pocket WiFi devices, JojoTalk also offers customers the ability to rent international cell phones from the most-trusted manufacturers, such as Apple, Motorola, Nokia and BlackBerry. All international cell phone rental packages include unlimited usage of voice calls, text messages, email and data streaming. JojoTalk also rents SIM cards for a daily rate that customers can use in their current mobile handset to ensure that customers can use mobile service anywhere they travel.

## Australia, New Zealand Governments Consider Decoupling Mobile Roaming

A German economic consultancy has recommended consumers that travel between Australia and New Zealand be allowed to choose any mobile phone carrier they want while roaming in either country, without having to swap out SIM cards. The recommendation is one of several currently being discussed between WiK-Consult and the Australian and New Zealand Governments under a two-year-old investigation into trans-Tasman mobile roaming charges. It is expected the "decoupling" mechanism could also allow mobile virtual network operators - those who sell mobile services on infrastructure owned by others - to offer roaming services as well.

## WiFi Offers Operators Clear Route for Data Roaming Monetization

Mobile network operators stand to benefit from a large untapped market in data roaming simply by employing WiFi services, according to a survey commissioned by roaming services provider, Mach. The online research, carried out by YouGov, has shown that 24 percent of smartphone/tablet users have never accessed mobile data when abroad. Of those that have, 45 per cent have not used 3G at all, and 43 percent prefer instead to connect over paid for WiFi. Chief Technology Officer, Mach said that these results demonstrate that WiFi is a key access technology for mobile data when abroad. When roaming subscribers move to WiFi, the operator effectively loses sight of them, and therefore misses out on the ability to sell further services to the customer. Operators should look today at how they can successfully market new WiFi offerings, both to gain market share of existing WiFi users, and to address the untapped market of smartphone and tablet owners who are currently not using data services when roaming."

## Sprint Nextel Signs Orange Telecom Deal

Sprint Nextel has reached a roaming agreement with France Telecom's Orange Business Services. Overland park, Kansas-based multinational telecommunications company, Sprint Nextel (NYSE:S), has reached a roaming agreement with France Telecom's Orange Business Services to provide machine-to-machine data services to multinational corporate customers. Vice-president of international wholesale for Sprint Nextel (NYSE:S), said that we look forward to working with Orange Business Services as a vital partner as we equip US business customers with a strong global M2M capability and help them reduce complexity by working with a single support team." Sprint Nextel (NYSE:S) shares were at 2.45 at the end of the last day's trading. There's been a -15.5 percent change in the stock price over the past 3 months.

## TRA Further Slashes Roaming Rates within GCC

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) announced the ceiling on roaming calls in GCC countries, bringing them down to 106bz/min (US\$ 0.27) for calls made within the country visited and 255bz/min (US\$ 0.66) for those made to GCC countries. Implementation of the caps was spread over two years after the International Roaming Working Group's recommendations were approved by the GCC Telecommunications Ministerial Committee in June 2010. The working group is now studying SMS, MMS and data roaming charges to develop an appropriate price cap regulation for the same.

## Unitel Roaming Service Reaches Six New Countries

Angola's privately-owned Unitel mobile phone operator has expanded its voice roaming and data services to six more countries from various continents, like Gabon, Australia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pharaoh Islands and Qatar. According to the source, in Lebanon and Pharaoh Islands, the data service has been expanded through a partnership set up with local operators MTC Touch/MIC 2 and Pharaoh Telecom, respectively. In order to expand the coverage of the voice roaming service, Unitel signed new agreements with operators DiGi, of Malaysia, Azur (Gabon) and Vodafone, to Qatar and Australia. The data roaming enables mobile phone firm's clients to continue accessing Internet through mobile phone or computer, while voice roaming allows making and receiving calls from abroad. Unitel has currently about 7.5 million customers.

## UWTMobile Releases USA SIM Card for International Travelers

UWTMobile has launched a new SIM card which will provide tourists and business travelers with an easy and economical way to use their mobile phone while visiting the United States. The USA SIM Cards are removable chips that can be transferred between unlocked mobile devices. Once users unlock their phones, they are able to begin saving money on phone calls. The affordable new international SIM card offers quick access to world-wide calling and allows travelers to stay in touch with associates, family, and friends when they are oceans away from home. There are no monthly fees, contracts, or connection fees associated with UWTMobile's USA SIM Card. With plans starting as low as US\$19, the USA SIM cards offer competitive roaming rates. This charge includes a \$10 call credit for up to 52 minutes of call time within the USA.

# "HARMONIZED POLICY"

An Enabler For Digital Economy Growth?

## Beyond Connectivity 2012

03<sup>rd</sup> & 04<sup>th</sup> April, 2012  
Al Bustan Palace, Ritz Carlton Hotel  
Muscat, Oman

Diamond Sponsor

عمانتل  
Omantel

Organizer

 **SAMENA**  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL  
BUILDING DIGITAL ECONOMIES



#304, Alfa Building, Knowledge Village, PO. Box: 502544, Dubai, UAE.  
Tel: +971-4-364-2700 | Fax: +971-4-4369-7513



[www.samenacouncil.org](http://www.samenacouncil.org)