

MR. JOHN OMO

KENYA'S CANDIDATE FOR SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE AFRICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNION (ATU)

Vision:

“To optimize the African Telecommunications Union’s (ATU) value to its membership and accelerate Africa’s digital transformation, by actively engaging and collaborating with ICT stakeholders in the region and globally.”

Mr. John Omo is the current Secretary-General of the African Telecommunications Union (ATU). Serving for the last four years, Mr. Omo has maintained a strategic view of Africa’s future. He has remained committed to pursuing and developing telecommunications/ICTs for Africa’s digital transformation.

Throughout his first term, Mr. Omo has embraced collaborative partnerships and worked closely with ATU’s leadership, members, strategic partners, and the General Secretariat to:

- Promote the strategic rollout of African ICT programmes and projects that resonate with the practical realities of the African ICT ecosystem, for accelerated ICT growth at the national, sub-regional, and regional levels.
- Spearhead the harmonization of licensing, policy, and regulatory frameworks as a strategic move for accelerated infrastructural development and innovation.

In his four years at the helm of ATU, Mr. Omo has gained a deeper understanding and appreciation of the critical issues affecting the Union and the ICT sector in the continent.

He will leverage the experience, relationships, and milestones gained over the last four years to ensure a vibrant and active Union that will influence policies, strategies, and infrastructure growth in Africa's telecommunications/ICT sector.

As the head of the Union’s General Secretariat, Mr. Omo has worked together with ATU Membership and other ICT stakeholders and in effect:

- a) Improved the Union’s image and visibility through rebranding.
- b) Strengthened the Union by engaging and expanding ATU Membership and financial base and formed strategic alliances through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with key ICT stakeholders.
- c) Co-ordinated preparations for and representation of African voices and positions at key decision-making ICT fora.
- d) Initiated a number of capacity development programmes for the membership.
- e) Undertaken various research initiatives in order to inform decision-making on policy and regulatory issues.
- f) Initiated and promoted innovation through the annual African Innovation Challenge.
- g) Developed strategies, frameworks, and recommendations to guide ATU Membership in the planning and implementation of ICT programmes in the radio sector.

Mr. Omo is a distinguished lawyer with vast international experience in legal matters in the ICT sector. He has previously served as the Director for Legal Services at the Communications Authority of Kenya (CA).

He has also held leadership positions at various international forums, including Kenya's delegations to several international and regional ICT meetings and conferences, such as the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), African Telecommunications Union (ATU), Universal Postal Union's (UPU) World Postal Congress, East African Postal, East African Communications Organization (formerly EARPTO), and Association of Regulators of Information and Communications of Eastern Africa (ARICEA), among others.

Mr. Omo has been instrumental in crafting legal instruments for various bodies dealing with ICTs regionally and globally. He has midwived critical legal, regulatory, and policy frameworks that have spurred the development of ICTs in great proportions.

Other International Positions

- Served as Legal Advisor to the Kenyan Government on the Trans-African Highways Bureau and was one of the legal advisors who negotiated and drafted the Trans-African Highways Bureau Treaty (1991).
- Member of and Legal Advisor to several negotiations on the use of Lake Victoria and Nile Basin resources. Mr. Omo also developed and drafted several instruments, including that of Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization.
- Legal advisor to the Kenya government delegations to the negotiations on the formation of the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and participated in drafting the IGAD Charter.
- Consultant to IGAD in studying "Kenya's Legal Regime for the Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)."
- Member of the Working Group on International Contracts Practices of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, 1998.
- Member and Legal Advisor to the government delegation during the East African Community Treaty negotiations and participated in drafting the initial Treaty texts and inter-country negotiations.
- Consultant to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP-REDSO) on the sub-regional project on "Environmental Law and Institutions in Africa" and wrote a report on the status of Environmental Law and Institutions in Kenya.

Mr. Omo holds a Master of Law Degree (with distinction) in International and Commercial Law from the University of Sheffield, UK, a Diploma in Human Rights Law from the UN Human Rights Centre and the International Labour Organization Centre, Geneva, a Diploma in Law from the Kenya School of Law, and a Bachelors of Law Degree (Upper Second Class) from the University of Nairobi.

PROMISES KEPT

When he took office in 2019, Mr. Omo pledged to “Re-model the African Telecommunications Union into a member-responsive organization that serves as the reference point for ICT in the continent to propel socio-economic transformation.”

Even with the unprecedented challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, that struck the globe soon after his election as the Secretary General's office, together with ATU membership, staff, and ICT stakeholders, Mr. Omo has overseen tremendous achievements at the Union.

2018 Promises	Milestones Achieved
Expand the ATU membership	Expanded the Union’s membership by bringing on board four Member States and 16 Associate Members.
Ensure the financial stability of the Union	<p>Worked with ATU Membership to provide more support to the Union through joint bilateral initiatives that enhanced the financial position and general outlook of the Union, led to liabilities being fully met, and increased Membership Contributions to about 11% between 2019 to 2021.</p> <p>Established a Reserve Fund where a percentage of the budget is to be deposited every year in order to stabilize the Union’s financial position and cushion it against uncertainties.</p> <p>Established a Fellowship Fund for supporting the participation of African delegations at various events and forums.</p>
Position the African Telecommunications Union as a credible regional institution	<p>Rebranded and repositioned the Union to improve its image and visibility, including developing a new logo and a four-year communication strategy to support the ATU 2019-2022 strategic plan.</p> <p>Coordinated African voices and positions at key international decision-making forums and conferences to ensure that Africa fully benefits. This included the World Radiocommunication Conference 2019, World Telecommunications Standardisation Assembly (WTSA-20), World Telecommunications Development Conference 2021, and has completed preparations for the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2022. Coordination is equally underway for the World Radiocommunication Conference 2023(WRC-23).</p>

<p>Increase the Union's strategic alliances and partnerships</p>	<p>Promoted institutional capacity through strategic partnerships by signing twelve (12) Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with regional, international and private sector organizations.</p> <p>Enhanced relationship with ATU Members by, among other approaches, holding the first-ever dialogue meeting with ATU Associate Members.</p>
<p>Build the capacity of ATU members</p>	<p>Built and strengthened ATU membership's capacity by facilitating workshops and courses such as the 'Generation of Satellite Notices' and 'Economic and Market-based Methods of Radio Frequency Spectrum Management.'</p>
<p>Exploit available opportunities in ICTs</p>	<p>Coordinated the development of ATU guidelines, strategies, recommendations, and plans for the optimum use of telecommunications/ICT resources, and accelerated digital transformation.</p> <p>These include the Africa 4IR Strategy, the ATU Strategy for Optimum Acquisition, Retention, and Utilization of Satellite Resources in Africa, the 1st ever edition of the African Spectrum Allocation Plan (AfriSAP), and the 1st set of ATU Spectrum Recommendations including Spectrum audit; Spectrum licensing for mobile/broadband systems; Spectrum evolution for mobile/broadband systems; and Spectrum management principles for national broadband spectrum plan including licensing roadmaps, and emerging and future spectrum management.</p> <p>Conducted studies in collaboration with partners on Model frameworks for Data Centres and Cloud Computing for Africa, Common Digital Security Policy, and Standards for Network Security and Information.</p>
<p>Increase the African continent's adoption and access to the Internet</p>	<p>Promoted research for evidence-informed decision making, including the scoping study on African representation in key international ICT organizations, a study on the State of Satellite Resources in Africa, a survey on Spectrum Policies for Rural Connectivity in Africa, and Internet Resilience.</p> <p>Promoted innovation through the annual ATU Africa Innovation Challenge. The initiative identifies and supports innovators and innovation ecosystem stakeholders in Africa.</p> <p>Spearheaded the promotion of the implementation of Resolution 170 of (WRC-19) that facilitates the acquisition/implementation of satellite resources for fixed-satellite service.</p>

Five Point Agenda for the Next Four Years

1. Bridging the Digital Divide in Africa

Bridging the digital divide is key to Africa accelerating its ICT development. This will be Mr. Omo's key priority for the next four years as Secretary General. He will engage all key stakeholders in order to identify and adopt approaches to overcome connectivity barriers. The Union will greatly focus on programmes and projects geared towards promoting infrastructural development.

The ever-changing and increasingly complex technological landscape requires telecom operators, regulators, and governments to be adept in technology adoption. Mr. Omo promises to focus on working with key stakeholders for the acquisition of and embracing necessary skills and technology for systems and services deployment.

To foster a coordinated approach to ICT development in the continent, Mr. Omo will continue championing harmonized policies and regulations at the regional and the sub-regional level for accelerated development to encourage private sector investment, ensure optimum use of the available limited ICT resources, and promote the sharing of resources and collaboration to achieve shared goals.

2. Fostering Inclusive ICT Growth

To ensure that no group in the African community is left behind, Mr. Omo promises to focus on inclusive ICT growth. The Union will work towards reducing the gender divide, ensuring that the ICT needs of the differently abled in our communities are addressed, supporting child online protection, and promoting innovation and uptake of ICTs among the youth.

3. Tackling Cyber Security Challenges

Cyber security will be one of Mr. Omo's key focus areas for the next four years as cyber-attacks, and threats are known to erode consumer confidence in ICTs and consequently slow down their uptake. Working hand in hand with the membership and stakeholders, Mr. Omo will seek to boost the state of preparedness for various countries and strengthen their capability to respond to emerging threats in cyberspace.

4. Building a Member Focused Organization

For the next four years, Mr. Omo promises to have the ATU focus on increasing the value of the Union's Membership by engaging in activities and programmes that have the greatest positive impact on Africa's ICT landscape.

To ensure a financially stable Union, Mr. Omo will continue engaging member states to understand their concerns and challenges and encourage them to meet their financial obligations to the Union while enhancing the value of the organization to them.

5. Positioning ATU as the Premier ICT Institution for Africa

Building on the awareness and recognition gained by the Union so far, Mr. Omo will continue positioning ATU as the continent's premier ICT institution uniting Africa's voice on ICT matters, and the specialized arm of the African Union in telecommunications/ICTs.

He will also continue to actively mobilize the Member States and other stakeholders to champion the African ICT agenda on global platforms.

The Republic of Kenya will appreciate the support of the member states in re-electing Mr. John Omo as the Secretary-General of the African Telecommunications Union during the Conference of Plenipotentiaries to be held on 25th and 26th July 2022 in Algiers, Algeria.