



## ATU VALUE PROPOSITION

### OUR RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS, CURRENT ACTIVE PROJECTS AND LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

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## FOREWORD

I am pleased to present to you the ATU Value Proposition, highlighting our recent achievements, current active projects, and a glimpse into the future. As a specialized agency of the African Union, in the field of telecommunications, the ATU is committed to promoting and defending Africa's interests in the global ICT fora.

Our unique role as a specialized institution has enabled us to facilitate the exchange of best practices and experiences among our members, develop appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks, and provide capacity building and training. Through these efforts, we have been able to make significant accomplishments in various areas of telecommunications and digital development in Africa.

In this brief paper, we showcase our recent achievements, which include the recovery of lost high-value satellite resources, optimization of the FM Sound Broadcasting Plan, innovation promotion through the Annual Innovation Challenge and the Innovation Portal, and policy and regulatory support. Additionally, we highlight our ongoing projects that aim to position Africa as the next-stop continent, matters ICT and telecommunications.

As an organization, we are committed to contributing to the realization of the "Africa we want" through our dedication to promoting telecommunications/ICTs and defending Africa's interests in the international arena. Our value proposition is a testament to our commitment to the digital transformation agenda of the African Union.

We invite you to explore the contents of our Value Proposition and join us in our efforts to make Africa a leader in the ICT space.

**John OMO**  
**Secretary General-African Telecommunications Union**

## INTRODUCTION

We are the African Telecommunications Union (ATU), a specialised institution (SI) of the African Union (AU) in the field of Telecommunications/ICTs currently headquartered in Nairobi. While our organization is an SI of the AU, we have our own constitution and convention with an opt-in membership framework. As of today, we have 51 Member States<sup>1</sup> and over 50 Associate Members<sup>2</sup> as members. Our main mission is to promote telecommunications/ICTs, as well as, promote and defend Africa's interests in international ICT fora. We have 13 statutory objectives as per Article 3 of our Constitution.

In this brief paper, we highlight our recent key achievements and value proposition as our contribution to the AU's Digital Transformation Agenda and ultimately towards realisation of the "*Africa we want*".

## THE UNIQUE ROLE ATU PLAYS

### **i. Development of Appropriate Policy and Regulatory Frameworks**

The development of appropriate telecommunications policy and regulatory frameworks is essential to the growth and sustainability of the African telecommunications industry. ATU recognizes this and has taken a proactive role in developing reference documents that outline best practices and model policies. These reference documents provide African countries with the necessary guidance to develop their own policies and regulations that meet their specific needs and challenges.

For example, the ATU has developed a model broadband policy that provides guidelines on how to improve broadband access and affordability in Africa. The model policy includes recommendations on spectrum management, licensing and competition, infrastructure sharing, and universal access. By adopting this model policy, countries can ensure that their telecommunications policies are in line with international best practices, which will attract investment and boost their telecommunications industry.

In addition, the ATU has developed a model cybersecurity framework that helps African countries to address the growing cybersecurity threats, a framework that promote the regulation of Over-the-Top (OTT) services, as well as other guidelines on e-skilling, e-commerce, digital financial services, and data protection. These frameworks are essential for promoting digital transformation, which is critical for economic growth and social development.

ATU's role in this regard is necessary and important to African countries to help meet their specific needs, attract investment, and promote growth and sustainability.

### **ii. Primary Interface with the ITU**

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<sup>1</sup> Only African states can be Member State.

<sup>2</sup> Companies/entities operating in or interested in the field of Telecommunications/ICTs with some legal presence in a Member State.

As Africa's primary interface with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the ATU is uniquely positioned to represent Africa's interests in the global ICT arena. We work closely with the ITU to ensure that Africa's voice is heard and that our concerns are addressed in international ICT fora.

Given that the ITU is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for coordinating and regulating international telecommunications, African countries who are members of the ITU are required to adhere to its regulations and policies. Therefore, ATU's participation in key decision-making conferences is critical in advocating for policies and regulations that support the development of the African telecommunications industry.

ATU's active participation, for instance, in the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) in 2021, resulted in the adoption of several African proposals that will contribute to the development of the continent's telecommunications sector. These proposals include the development of a roadmap for the deployment of 5G networks in Africa, improving the regulatory environment for digital financial services, and enhancing the use of satellite technology for rural connectivity.

Assisting African countries to speak with one voice, strengthens the continent's bargaining power at the international stage.

#### **i. Representation of the interests of its members at various global decision-making conferences**

ATU plays a critical role in representing the interests of its member states at various global decision-making conferences, particularly in the field of telecommunications and ICT. As an organization with a strong presence and reputation in the international community, ATU is able to effectively advocate for policies, regulations, and investments that benefit its members.

For example, ATU has represented African countries at the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Plenipotentiary Conference, World Telecommunications Standardization Assembly (WTSA), World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), Internet Governance Forum (IGF), African Union Summit, World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC), Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) Conference, among other forums which are for discussing telecommunications development priorities and strategies.

Through its participation in this conference, ATU is able to ensure that Africa's needs and concerns are taken into account when global telecommunications policies are being formulated. It further ensures that African countries have a voice in the development of standards, which can have a significant impact on the cost and quality of telecommunications services.

#### **ii. Facilitating the exchange of best practices and experiences among its members**

ATU facilitates the exchange of best practices and experiences among its members, providing significant value to its members in the telecommunications industry. By sharing their experiences

and knowledge, ATU members can learn from one another and adopt innovative solutions for common challenges facing the industry. This knowledge sharing is essential as no country can have expertise in all fields of telecommunications.

To this extent, ATU organizes various conferences and workshops that bring together telecommunications experts from different African countries to share their experiences and best practices. These events provide a platform for members to learn from each other and develop solutions to common challenges. The exchange of best practices and experiences has led to the development of several innovative solutions in the telecommunications industry in Africa, such as the conception and implementation of projects that require collective action such as Digital TV and IPv6 Migration.

In addition, ATU's knowledge sharing initiatives extend to the development and adoption of appropriate African telecommunications policy and regulatory frameworks via reference/model documents. ATU provides these reference documents to its members to ensure that they have access to best practices in the telecommunications industry. This helps to ensure that African countries develop telecommunications policies and regulations that are in line with global best practices and promote the development of the industry on the continent.

The exchange of best practices and experiences among ATU members also helps to build stronger partnerships and collaborations within the industry. As members learn from one another and develop solutions to common challenges, they are more likely to collaborate on future projects and initiatives, leading to the development of a stronger and more cohesive telecommunications industry in Africa.

### **iii. Capacity Building and Training**

Capacity building and training are crucial components of the ATU's value proposition, as they enable the organization to achieve its mandate of promoting and defending Africa's interests in international ICT fora. Through capacity building and training, the ATU is able to enhance the technical capabilities of its members, which is essential for the development of the African telecommunications industry.

One way in which the ATU provides capacity building and training is through its regional and sub-regional training programs, which are tailored to the specific needs of its members. These programs cover a wide range of topics, including network planning and management, cybersecurity, policy and regulatory frameworks, and emerging technologies such as 5G.

ATU further collaborates with other institutions and organizations such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to develop joint training programs, an example being on spectrum management for African countries. This program has helped to build the capacity of African regulators and policymakers in spectrum management, which is essential for the effective allocation and management of radio frequency spectrum.

Another important aspect of its capacity building and training program is ATU's provision of technical assistance to its members. This ensures that its members have the necessary expertise to compete effectively in the global market.

## OUR NOTABLE RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS

### **i. Recovery of lost high-value satellite resources**

ATU successfully recovered lost satellite resources for 31 African countries<sup>3</sup>, enabling them to participate in broadcasting satellite systems (BSS). This was achieved through the implementation of a resolution which lifted the restriction against BSS in the geostationary arc frequency band of 11.7 – 12.2GHz. The resolution also prioritized the recovery of new resources for countries that had lost their BSS resources. The Radiocommunication Bureau identified 31 African countries as beneficiaries, along with 14 other countries outside Africa. With the assistance of ITU and RRB, the ATU facilitated technical support and capacity building programs, resulting in the beneficiary countries recovering their satellite resources. The endorsement of the recovered resources and their admission to the relevant ITU resource registers is expected to be confirmed at the WRC-23 in Dubai.

The recovered resources are valued at billions of US dollars. This is a significant achievement for Africa in the complex area of international satellite resources management. By prioritizing the recovery of lost satellite resources, Africa has positioned itself as an equal player in the international arena, empowering the continent's telecommunication and broadcasting sectors.

### **ii. Optimization of the FM Sound Broadcasting Plan (the GE84 Plan)**

ATU launched a project on the optimization of the GE84 Plan for Africa. The project recognizes that FM Sound broadcasting remains a key service and core to ICTs in Africa – due to its affordability and ability to reach the masses over the airwaves. In order to ensure continued growth and sustainability of FM radio into the feasible future, ATU, in collaboration with the ITU, rolled out the optimisation of the FM Sound broadcasting plan (the GE84 Plan). This plan governs the planning and use of FM sound broadcasting frequency channels in Africa. This project aimed at identifying new usable radio frequency for FM sound broadcasting to promote and sustain FM radio into the future. Of the 21,503 new channels sought by African countries, a remarkable 18,326 were deemed usable representing 87% success rate. Clearly, the project was a resounding success.

### **iii. Innovation promotion through the Annual Innovation Challenge and the Innovation Portal**

ATU's Annual Innovation Challenge that directly seek to promote the much-needed innovations in Africa that are intended to solve local challenges is now in its 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. The innovation programme has since attracted and sustained the sponsorship of Huawei Technologies Limited

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<sup>3</sup> They are Benin; Botswana; Burundi; Comoros; Congo; Democratic Republic of Congo; Djibouti; Equatorial Guinea; Eswatini; Gabon; Kenya; Lesotho; Madagascar; Malawi; Mali; Mauritius; Mozambique; Namibia; Nigeria; Rwanda; Seychelles; Somalia; South Africa; South Sudan; Sudan; Tanzania; Tchad; Tunisia; Uganda; Zambia and Zimbabwe.

(Title sponsor), Intel Corporation, GSM Association, AfriLabs, Ministry of ICT Egypt, Broadband Infracore and RCD Africa.

As a product of the Series, ATU went further to launch the ATU Africa Innovation Portal, providing a dynamic platform for African innovators, researchers, start-ups, and established companies to drive innovation in the African telecommunications industry.

The portal offers a range of features including a section that features the latest and most innovative solutions and technologies from African innovators and entrepreneurs, a list of incubators and accelerators operating in Africa, funding opportunities for start-ups and innovative projects in Africa, news and insights on the latest trends and developments in Africa's innovation ecosystem, events, programmes, and competitions, success stories of African start-ups, and resources for entrepreneurs and innovators in Africa, including legal advice, business planning, and marketing strategies.

#### **iv. Policy and Regulatory Support**

ATU has achieved significant accomplishments in various areas of telecommunications and digital development in Africa through Policy and Regulatory Support. These initiatives help African countries to bridge the digital divide, improve digital literacy, promote responsible e-waste management, safeguard their network infrastructure, and integrate emerging technologies to foster economic growth and job creation. They include:

➤ **Developed a strategy framework to migrate Africa from IPv4 to IPV6**

ATU developed a strategy framework to migrate Africa from IPv4 to IPV6. The framework provides a guideline for African countries to adopt the new IP version and create awareness on the importance of IPV6 in the development of ICT infrastructure. The migration to IPV6 is critical for Africa to keep up with the global trend towards the internet of things (IoT) and to meet the demand for more IP addresses. IPV6 will provide Africa with enough IP addresses to connect more devices, foster innovation, and increase efficiency in the use of digital technologies.

➤ **Developed a model framework on Data Centres and Cloud Computing services and Infrastructures for Africa**

ATU has developed a model framework to encourage the development of national data centres in Africa. The framework includes guidelines on the establishment of data centres, cloud computing services, and infrastructures. The initiative will enhance the data management capacity of African countries and encourage innovation in the digital sector.

➤ **developed a model framework for e-skilling in Africa**

ATU has developed a model framework for e-skilling in Africa, including aspects of the school curriculum. The framework also covers the special case of persons with disabilities and special needs. The aim is to improve digital literacy and bridge the digital divide in Africa. The framework



will facilitate access to e-learning resources, ICT tools, and relevant training programs to help equip Africans with the skills needed to participate in the digital economy.

➤ **Developed a white paper on connectivity and accessibility best practices in Africa**

ATU has developed a white paper on connectivity and accessibility best practices in Africa. The paper provides guidelines to African countries on how to improve connectivity and accessibility in their respective countries. The framework includes a regional framework to facilitate access to submarine cables to all countries, particularly landlocked countries. The initiative will help African countries to bridge the digital divide and provide access to the internet to all.

➤ **Developed guidelines on e-waste management and related indicators for Africa**

ATU has developed guidelines on e-waste management and related indicators for Africa. The guidelines aim to promote responsible e-waste management practices in Africa and encourage the adoption of the circular economy principles. The initiative will create awareness on the environmental impact of e-waste and promote sustainable e-waste management practices.

➤ **Developed a common digital security policy and standards for network security and information systems**

ATU has developed a common digital security policy and standards for network security and information systems. The policy and standards provide guidelines to African countries on how to safeguard their network infrastructure and information systems from cyber threats. The initiative will help African countries to build resilient and secure digital infrastructure and promote digital trust in Africa.

➤ **Developed 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR) Strategy**

ATU has developed the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR) Strategy for Africa. The strategy provides a roadmap for African countries to adopt and integrate emerging technologies such as AI, IoT, and blockchain in their respective economies. The initiative will help African countries to leverage technology to foster economic growth, job creation and address the social challenges facing the continent.

**v. Coordinated efforts to secure significant amounts and appropriate types of broadband spectrum**

Under our coordination, Africa (and therefore African countries) has been able to secure significant amounts and appropriate type of broadband spectrum. The spectrum, which notably includes the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Digital Dividend spectrum (the 800 and 700MHz broadband spectrum respectively) has directly benefited countries around Africa in terms of licence revenue to treasuries and more importantly promoting enhanced broadband delivery. It is worth stating that among the six (06) regions of the world, Africa has the highest amount of spectrum identified for broadband. We see such achievements in the light of our coordination work which at times includes providing technical advisories.

#### **vi. Continuation of the ITSO and therefore preservation of the Common Heritage**

ATU spearheaded the continuation of the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (ITSO) via the development of the African common proposals to its 40th Assembly of Parties (AP40) which were key in the ITSO Agreement not being terminated, as well as, extension of the term of its director general, Mr Patrick Masambu (of Uganda). The significance of which has been the preservation of the high-value (of about 2 billion US dollars) satellite resources held by the ITSO – the resources are collectively termed as Common Heritage.

#### **vii. Being an able Africa's primary interface with and to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU)**

The efficacy of ITU in the global digital transformation cannot be in question. By ably coordinating the development and championing of the African voice (proposals and positions) to the various conferences and forums of the ITU, we have been able to ensure that our aspirations as Africa are part of the outcomes thus ensuring significant benefit to our continent. A good example is the passage of Resolution 559 by World Radiocommunications Conference of 2019 which paved way for the recovery of satellite resources for 31 African countries worth millions of US dollars to the beneficiary countries and billions as a collective. And given the breadth and depth of issues under the table at the ITU fora, no single country can effectively participate in them and hope for a favourable outcome – our role therefore in identifying, pulling together expert resources and rationalization thereof at the fora becomes crucial.

#### **viii. First African institution to implement dotAfrica domain**

The implementation of the dotAfrica domain by ATU was a significant step towards promoting African identity and online presence. The dotAfrica domain provides African businesses, individuals, and organizations with a unique online identity that is representative of the African continent. This is of great value as it helps to promote African businesses and organizations on the global stage, while also fostering a sense of community among African internet users.

ATU's leadership role in the implementation of the dotAfrica domain, has demonstrated its commitment to promoting African development and innovation in the digital space. The domain has since, already been adopted by several organizations across Africa, including the African Union and the African Development Bank. This remains important for promoting unity and collaboration among African countries and to stimulate the potential to spur economic growth in Africa by attracting investment and promoting local entrepreneurship.

#### **ix. Conception and implementation of projects that require collective action**

The conception and implementation of projects that require collective action, such as Digital TV and IPv6 Migration, have significant value in promoting the digital transformation of Africa. These projects require collaboration and coordination among multiple stakeholders, including governments, regulatory bodies, and private sector organizations.

For instance, the migration from IPv4 to IPv6 is a critical step in the growth of the internet, and it requires the participation of all stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition. The ATU's strategy framework on the migration from IPv4 to IPv6 for Africa provides guidance and support to member countries to facilitate the adoption of IPv6, which offers more IP addresses and improved security features.

Similarly, the ATU's involvement in the Digital TV migration project is instrumental in ensuring that all African countries adopt the same digital broadcasting standard, which will provide better quality television and free up spectrum for broadband services. This project requires collective action, and the ATU has played a vital role in coordinating efforts across the continent.

#### **x. The scoping study and its implementation**

ATU validated the Scoping Study on African Representation in Key International ICT meetings to map out agencies that play vital roles in international and public policies in ICT. The ATU General Secretariat will roll out the implementation in phases and leverage the African permanent missions in Geneva for greater impact.

### **PART D -- LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE**

As we look to the future, the African Telecommunications Union (ATU) is committed to delivering even more value to our member states and the continent as a whole. We have identified five key areas of focus that we will prioritize beginning June 1, 2023, in line with our mandate and vision for a more connected and digitally empowered Africa. These are:

#### **i. Promotion of Infrastructure and Connectivity**

The ATU plans to promote the development and deployment of resilient and high-quality telecommunications infrastructure, as well as the expansion of connectivity to under-served areas. This will involve collaboration with stakeholders to identify and address barriers to infrastructure development and ensure universal access to affordable and reliable broadband connectivity. The ATU will also promote the deployment of emerging technologies such as 5G, artificial intelligence, and the internet of things to enhance connectivity and drive innovation in Africa.

#### **ii. Promotion of Digital Services**

The ATU aims to support the development of a vibrant digital economy in Africa through the promotion of digital services. This will involve the creation of an enabling regulatory environment that fosters innovation, the development of relevant digital skills, and the provision of access to digital platforms and tools. The ATU will also collaborate with stakeholders to support the growth of key digital sectors such as e-commerce, fintech, and e-government.

#### **iii. Promotion of Safety/Cybersecurity and Data Management**

The ATU recognizes the importance of cybersecurity and data protection in the digital age and plans to promote the development and implementation of effective cybersecurity and data

management strategies. This will involve the establishment of robust cybersecurity frameworks and the promotion of best practices in data protection. The ATU will also work with stakeholders to develop capacity-building programs to enhance cybersecurity skills and promote the adoption of secure digital technologies.

#### **iv. Promotion of Enabling Environment**

The ATU recognizes the critical role of policy and regulation in promoting innovation and growth in the digital sector. To this end, the ATU plans to engage with stakeholders to develop enabling policies and regulations that support the growth of the digital economy. This will involve the creation of an enabling environment that fosters innovation, promotes investment, and protects the rights of consumers and businesses.

#### **v. Promotion of ICT Human Capacity Development**

The ATU recognizes the importance of human capacity development in driving innovation and growth in the digital sector. To this end, the ATU plans to promote the development of relevant digital skills, particularly in areas such as coding, cybersecurity, and data analysis. The ATU will work with stakeholders to develop capacity-building programs, including training and education initiatives, to enhance digital skills across the African continent. This will ensure that African citizens are equipped with the skills they need to participate fully in the digital economy and drive innovation and growth in the region.

### **Conclusion**

From this value proposition, it is evident that ATU's "return on investment, ROI" is the order of many hundreds' folds. This is because our value to membership, in particular Member States in recent times, values to millions of US dollars per Member State and billions as a collective. We have been able to achieve significant milestones due to our financial prudence and support from Membership.

ATU is the ultimate platform that empowers our membership to turn their vision into reality, providing them the resources and expertise to help achieve their goals and make a meaningful impact. We give Africa a reason to believe in the future.