

REPORT OF THE 27TH ASSEMBLY OF TELECOM OPERATORS HELD ONLINE ON 7TH JULY 2021

1. INTRODUCTION

The Telecom Operators Assembly was held from on 7th July 2021 online.

The Assembly was opened by Chairperson, Mr. Msasi Enocent from TTCL, Tanzania welcomed members present at the 27th Assembly. He thanked all participants for making it and RURA for hosting the assembly as well as EACO secretariat for facilitating.

The meeting was attended by 83 representatives from Telecom Operators, National Regulatory bodies of the EACO members, namely Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda the EACO Secretariat

2. ELECTION OF THE BUREAU

The Assembly discussed the above item and elected the Rapporteurs of the bureau as follows:

- (i) Mr. Innocent RUZINDANA (Rwanda)- 1st Rapporteur
- (ii) Mr. Deogratias BIZINDAVYI (Burundi) - 2nd Rapporteur.

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND PROGRAMME

The Assembly adopted the agenda attached in *Annex 1*.

4. REPORT OF THE OUTGOING CHAIRPERSON

The Assembly received and noted the report of the Outgoing Chairperson.

The Report was discussed and adopted as presented with the following key issues arising;

- a) The trends in the Telecom sector which include adoption of emerging technologies. It was noted that countries need to position themselves to adopt the emerging technological trends like 5G, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Block chain among others.

- b) Digital divide issue. It was noted that many areas in the member state countries remain unconnected and as a result, the cost of ICT services and devices remain high.
- c) the ongoing pilot of the EACO smart phone initiative project was started with Rwanda with the aim of enabling people access smart devices.
- d) Implementation of EACO projects and activities were noted. It was noted that there was a need for operators to highly participate in the initiatives and projects of EACO.

The detailed report of the outgoing Chairperson is contained in *Annex 2*.

5. REVIEW OF THE AGREED ACTIONS FROM THE LAST TELECOM ASSEMBLY MEETING

The report of the 26th Telecom Assembly is contained in *Annex 3*.

The agreed actions from the last Telecom assembly held in Mwanza, Tanzania in 2019 were discussed and the actions taken were reviewed as follows:

| | Recommendation Made | Status/ Comment |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regulators and EACO Secretariat to encourage operators to participate in online meetings; | Invitation were extended to operators to attend EACO meetings and events. Workshops organised with topical issues. The topics addressed included: 5G , Spectrum Management, IoT, Infrastructure |
| 2 | Each administration/Regulators to establish a meeting room with online facilities | There is a general increase in use online platforms for meetings |
| 3 | Operators should acquire a border roaming management tool as a technical solution to | Cross border Mechanism was proposed by WG5. Consultation is ongoing with the operators in the region |

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|---|---|--|
| | mitigate forced cross border roaming; | |
| 4 | Operators with limited or no network coverage to the main border towns are advised to extend coverage to all key areas to serve better all its subscribers; | <p>Network expansion is a continuous exercise</p> <p>Verification exercise for cross border coordination expected to take place during the FY 2021/2022. The situation of network coverage at the borders will be determined.</p> <p>Update can be received from operators attending the meeting</p> |
| 5 | Respective country RAs should take responsibility in fast tracking EACO deliverables with working group member | This is a continuous process. |
| 6 | EACO to fast track the Databank project | <p>There is good progress of the databank. The databank was implemented and is operational.</p> <p>The ongoing activities are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Quarterly data is being submitted ii. Data validation and generating reports is ongoing |

6. HANDOVER OF CHAIRMANSHIP.

The outgoing chairperson of the Telecom Assembly Mr. Msasi Enocent handed over the chairmanship to Mr. Amit Chawla the Managing Director of Airtel Rwanda who was represented by Mr. Pierre Kayitana.

Mr. Pierre Kayitana thanked the outgoing chairman and the members for entrusting him to chair the assembly for the upcoming period.

He pledged his commitment and that of Mr. Amit Chawla and collaboration towards the success of the EACO activities.

7. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF WORKING GROUPS.

7.1 WG2: ICT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, CONNECTIVITY, SHARING AND DIGITAL INCLUSION

TOR implementation status:

- 1) It was noted that a detailed infrastructure guideline document was completed and available for endorsement.
- 2) A toolkit for universal access and service as well as strategies and guidelines for achievement of digital inclusion in the region was developed and available for endorsement.
- 3) Recommendation on best practices for system/network management issues within the region is under review by the working group.
- 4) Guidelines to promote peering and interconnection in the East African region are in process. It was highlighted that request was made to the NRAs for experts support but the feedback was only received from Burundi.
- 5) Template reports were developed to provide guidelines on management of critical infrastructure.

The WG 2 noted the following challenges:

- (i) inconsistent and irregular participation by members
- (ii) Minimal participation from private sector
- (iii) Unreliable connectivity during online meetings
- (iv) Data availability issues (No database for the region)

It was noted that the following documents were available for endorsement and adoption

- i. Infrastructure Sharing Guidelines
- ii. A toolkit for universal access and service as well as strategies and guidelines for achievement of digital inclusion in the region

The details of this WG2 report are available in the *Annex 4*.

7.2 WG3: ICT APPLICATIONS, CONSUMER PROTECTION ISSUES AND CYBER SECURITY

The WG3 activity status:

- (i) Drafted EACO guidelines for quality of services for mobile voice services
- (ii) Currently developing guidelines on addressing cyber security issues

(iii) Developed a manual on harmonized strategy to address risks in mobile financial services.

(iv) Developed a regional strategy for establishing and operationalization of computer emergency response teams (CERTs)

WG3 Challenges:

- a) Unavailability of subject matter experts for both physical and online meetings
- b) Irregularity in participation
- c) Physical meetings affected by budgetary constraints and covid-19 pandemic

The details of this WG3 report are available in the *Annex 5*.

7.3 WG5: BROADCASTING DEVELOPMENT, SPECTRUM MANAGEMENT & MEDIA SERVICES REGULATIONS

The WG5 activity status:

- (i) Developed strategies of introducing digital sound broadcasting in EAC member states and document is ready for endorsement
- (ii) Developed a roadmap for migration of interoperable digital television receivers and document ready for endorsement and adoption.
- (iii) Developed strategies and regulatory frameworks for digital rights **management** and digital content management. Draft document available and was circulated to members for comments.
- (iv) A questionnaire was prepared, circulated and comments received to develop and harmonize spectrum management strategy and roadmap for future spectrum release.
- (v) Developed a harmonized framework for authorization of satellite earth stations by member states. Draft document available.
- (vi) Document completed to analyze the coordination procedures and protection of satellite orbit in member states with a view of improving satellite orbits.
- (vii) Draft document was done to review frame work of cross border coordination operations.

It was noted that the following documents were available for endorsement and adoption

- i. Regulatory framework for introducing digital sound broadcasting (DSB) within EACO member states
- ii. Migration Plan for adoption of conditional access module (CAM) and deploy terrestrial television (DTT) receivers in East Africa

- iii. Harmonized framework for authorization of Earth Stations in Motions (ESIMS) based on the updated outcomes of WRC-19
- iv. Project Concept Paper for EACO Cubesat Project and a proposal for a regional broadcasting satellite for East Africa

The details of this WG5 report are available in the *Annex 6*.

7.4 WG6: COMMUNICATIONS NUMBERING PLANS, IP ADDRESSING, SERVICE PRICING & INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

WG6 recommended the following document for adoption.

- i. Model guidelines on DNSSEC deployment
- ii. Identified services that need to be harmonized
- iii. Adoption of guidelines on allocation of Network Color Code (NCC)
- iv. Adoption of guidelines by member states for transition from IPV4 to IPV6
- v. Costing methodologies for telecommunications services

The details of this WG6 report are available in the *Annex 6*.

7.5 WG7: E- WASTE AND GREEN ICTS

WG7 recommended the following:

- i. EACO to resume physical meetings since there are certain activities which are better achieved with such interactions.
- ii. EACO member organizations are requested to continue supporting the participation of their staff in ITU-T and ITU-D study groups related to e-waste other forums.
- iii. Member organizations to nominate to WG7 members with expertise in counterfeit gadget issues.

The details of this WG7 report are available in the *Annex 7*.

8. CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

The Assembly of Telecom Operators identified and recommend the following Cross Cutting Issues for submission to the Joint Working Committee:

- 1) Active Participation of members states in WRC-23 preparation meetings
- 2) Cross border frequency coordination when required to participate in verification exercise there is response and full participation
- 3) Participation of telecom operators in the activities of EACO is paramount
- 4) Collaboration and sensitization in regard to introduction of Digital Sound Broadcasting (DSB)
- 5) Need for experts in the different working Groups
- 6) Budget constraint to enable member participation
- 7) Need for physical meetings
- 8) Develop QoS guidelines for Data Services
- 9) Interconnections issues especially on fiber and wireless connectivity. Limitation of agreements and capacity need to be addressed
- 10) Cyber security is an area of focus
- 11) To provide rules and regulation of emerging technologies
- 12) Promote connectivity in Rural areas in the region

9. WAY FORWARD FOR TELECOM ASSEMBLY

- 1) Cross border forced roaming is still an existing problem.
 - a. Operators urged to fully participate in the activities of mitigating forced roaming.
 - b. MNOs to review and provide comment the updated Mechanism for Cross Border Coordination for Mobile
 - c. All participants and stakeholders urged to work together and collectively during the verification exercise
- 2) EACO Databank reports and harmonized statistics should be made available and shared
- 3) Members to provide timely feedback to Working group draft documents
- 4) Encourage participation in the Working groups including ensuring attendance of the right experts
- 5) Experts from Industry/ operators urged to participate actively in the Preparation for WRC-23. Identified agenda items are: Agenda Item 1.5 on review of IMT services in the band 470-694 MHz, and Agenda 1.2 consideration of IMT in the mid band/ C-band
- 6) OTT are aiding communication and bridging digital divide; there is however a need for a harmonized approach/framework for OTT
- 7) MNOs to participate in the management of e-waste through the following ways:
 - a. segregation of e-waste and establish collection center (take back mechanisms)
 - b. participate in national e-waste steering committee
 - c. Awareness campaigns
 - d. E-waste Survey

- e. Disposal of e-waste to be done through licensed e-waste recyclers
- 8) Capacity building on emerging technologies
- 9) Encourage cooperation among EAC members and other international organizations

10. CLOSING OF THE TELECOM ASSEMBLY

In the closing remarks, the Chairman thanked the members and other participants for their participation in the Assembly meeting and were encouraged to actively participate in the future work of the Telecom Assembly.

The Chairman therefore declared the meeting closed at 13:00 hrs EAT

ANNEX 1: AGENDA FOR TELECOM ASSEMBLY



AGENDA FOR
TELECOM ASSEMBLY.

ANNEX 2: REPORT OF THE OUTGOING CHAIRPERSON OF THE TELECOM ASSEMBLY



Report of Outgoing
Chairperson of Teleco

ANNEX 3: REPORT OF THE 26TH TELECOM ASSEMBLY



Assembly of Telecom
Operators JULY 2019.

ANNEX 4: WG2 REPORT



EACO assemblies WG
2 Report Presentation

ANNEX 5: WG3 REPORT



WG3-Report.pdf

ANNEX 6: WG5 REPORT



WG5 report at EACO
Assemblies.pdf

ANNEX 7: WG6 REPORT



EACO WG 6
Report-06.07.21.pdf

ANNEX 8: WG7 REPORT