EACO | East African Communications Organisation

Communications for all in East Africa

REPORT OF THE 28TH ASSEMBLY OF TELECOM OPERATORS HELD ON 28TH JUNE 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

The Telecom Operators Assembly was held on the 28th June 2023 at Royal Palace Hotel in Bujumbura, Burundi.

The Assembly was opened by Mr Janvier SIMBA, the Head of Network Operations at Econet, Burundi on behalf of Mr. Emmanuel Hamez, the Managing Director of Airtel Rwanda and outgoing Chairman of the Telecom Assembly, where he has served for the past two years. In his remarks, he welcomed members present at the 28th Assembly of Telecom Operators and thanked them for attending this very important event of the EACO Congress week.

The meeting was attended by 35 representatives from Telecom Operators, National Regulatory bodies of the EACO members, namely Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda, Industry Partners, ATU and the EACO Secretariat. List of attendance is attached as *Annex 1.*

2. ELECTION OF THE BUREAU

The Rapporteurs of the bureau were elected as follows:

(i) Mr. Prudence Nzimana (Burundi)- 1st Rapporteur
(ii) Eng. Mabe Emmanuel (South Sudan) - 2nd Rapporteur.

3. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND PROGRAMME**

The Assembly adopted the agenda attached in *Annex 2.*

4. **REPORT OF THE OUTGOING CHAIRPERSON**

The Assembly received and noted the report of the Outgoing Chairperson. This was delivered by the Liaison Manager in charge of ICT at the EACO Secretariat, Mr. Andrew Changa.

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 among others. It highlighted the status of 5G implementation by Member States in the East African Region.

b) Digital divide. It was noted that many areas in the Member States remain unconnected and this is an area that Telecom operators, Regulators and Government in general needed to put more emphasis on.

c) Cost of ICT services and devices remain high. The high cost of ICT services especially broadband and smart devices has continued to contribute the digital divide. Telecom operators, Regulators and Government in general need to put more emphasis on to ensure access of communication services to all citizens.

d) The report also noted that a lot of work had been accomplished by the various working groups and that this would be highlighted by the performance reports that would be presented by the various Chairpersons of these working groups.

The detailed report of the outgoing Chairperson is contained in *Annex 3.*

5. HANDOVER OF CHAIRMANSHIP.

The outgoing chairperson of the Telecom Assembly, Mr. Emmanuel Hamez, Managing Director of Airtel Rwanda handed over the chairmanship to Mr. Celestin Bukene, Director of Public Relations at ECONET LEO who was represented by Mr. Janvier SIMBA, the Head of Network Operations at ECONET LEO.

On behalf of Mr. Celestin BUKENE, Mr SIMBA Janvier thanked the outgoing chairman and the members for entrusting him to chair the assembly for the upcoming period.

He pledged his commitment and support towards the success of the EACO activities.

6. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF WORKING GROUPS.

The chairpersons of the various working groups under the Telecom Assembly made presentations that highlighted their mandate, Terms of Reference, status of all activities that had been planned for in the previous cycle and the planned activities for the next strategic plan cycle. They requested the Telecom Assembly to consider and adopt the following documents.

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

i) Guidelines for management of Critical Infrastructure in the Region
ii) Best Practices for System/Network Management issues within the Region

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

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

i) EACO Guidelines for Quality of Service for Mobile Voice Services
ii) Manual on Harmonized Strategy to address risks in Digital Financial Services (DFS)
iii) Regional strategy for establishing and operationalization of Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs)

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

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

(i)   EACO Harmonized framework for Satellite Licensing

(ii) EACO radio frequency spectrum policy guidelines

(iii) EACO Satellite filing and Coordination guidelines

(iv) Harmonized spectrum management strategy and roadmap for future spectrum release

(v)   EACO Radio Frequency Spectrum Allocation Plan.

(vi) Guidelines for content sharing, digital rights management and digital content management

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

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

i.   Guideline for Competition assessments in the communication sector

ii. EACO Frequency Spectrum Pricing Guidelines

iii. Guidelines for Metering and Billing for Voice and Data Services

iv. Costing Methodologies for regulated basic Postal Services

The details of this WG6 report are available in *Annex 7.*

6.5 WG7: E-WASTE MANAGEMENT AND GREEN ICTS

WG7 requested the the Assembly of Telecom Operators to note, adopt and approve the report with the following recommendations:

i.   Countries to enact various laws, regulations, guidelines and standards on e-waste management;

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ii.   Member States to consider allocating a budget for e-waste management in order to conduct more awareness and fund e-waste management projects;

iii.   Member States to continue with the implementation of the 2nd Regional E-waste Management Strategy (2022– 2027) while sharing experiences and success stories;

iv.   Member States to device mechanisms for getting e-Waste from the Government and its institutions for proper disposal;

v.   There is a need to have more experts on Green ICTs and Counterfeit Gadgets management in WG 07;

vi.   EACO member organizations should continue supporting the participation of their staff in ITU-T and ITU-D study groups related to E-waste.

The details of this WG7 report are available in *Annex 8.*

6.6 WG1:   EACO   COMMUNICATIONS   SECTOR   INDICATOR HARMONISATION

WG1 requested the the Assembly of Telecom Operators to note, adopt and approve the report with the following recommendations:

i.   Ensure regular participation in all meetings;

ii.   Cooperation with experienced bodies in Communication Data Analysis such as ITU, GSMA;

iii.   Advanced Capacity Building for the Databank Working Group Members in state of the art Data science.

The details of this WG7 report are available in *Annex 9.*

7. CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

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

1) Active Participation of Members States in WRC-23 preparation meetings and other ITU Radiocommunication meetings;

2) Cross border frequency coordination in the region;

3) Participation of telecom operators in the activities of EACO;

4) Promotion of Rural connectivity in the region;

5) Need for experts in the different working Groups;

6) Budgetary support to enable member participation;

7) Cyber security is an area of focus with the increased use of internet services;

8) To provide critically handle the regulation of emerging technologies in region.

8. WAY FORWARD FOR TELECOM ASSEMBLY

1) Handle the issue of cross border forced roaming;

   a. Operators urged to fully participate in the activities of mitigating forced roaming.

   b. MNOs encouraged to deploy border roaming solutions to mitigate forced roaming

   c. To review the existing mobile cross border frequency coordination mechanism in the next cycle taking into account the newly established continental agreement on the same (Harmonized Calculation Methods For Africa – HCM4A)

2) EACO Working Group on Harmonised Sector Indicator Harmonization makes its reports available to the public and stakeholders;

3) Encourage participation in the Working groups including ensuring attendance of the right experts;

4) Experts from operators and other industry partners urged to participate actively in the preparation of all EACO documents;

5) Capacity building on emerging technologies;

6) Encourage cooperation between EACO and other regional organizations at strategic level;

7) Utilize the signed MoU between EACO and HUAWEI to enhance cooperation in various areas of expertise;

9. CLOSING OF THE TELECOM ASSEMBLY.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Janvier SIMBA thanked members for their unwavering support and contribution during the meeting and informed them that the joint committee meeting would be held in the afternoon of 29th/06/2023 and all were invited to attend.

11.0 CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD:

The Congress is hereby invited to:

- ➢ Note and adopt the report of the Assembly of Telecom Operators; and
- ➢ Provide any further guidance the Congress may deem necessary towards the work of the Assembly of Telecom Operators.

Celestine BUKENE
Chairperson.

ANNEXES.

ANNEX 1: ATTENDANCE LIST

AGENDA FOR
TELECOM ASSEMBLY

ANNEX 2: AGENDA FOR TELECOM ASSEMBLY

ANNEX 3: REPORT OF THE OUTGOING CHAIRPERSON OF THE TELECOM ASSEMBLY

Report of Outgoing
Chairperson of Teleco

ANNEX 4: WG2 REPORT

EACO WG 2
Report.pdf

WG2 Adopted
documents June 2023

ANNEX 5: WG3 REPORT

WG 3 Presentation to
Assembles June 2023

WG3 Adopted
Documents.rar

ANNEX 6: WG5 REPORT

PPT_Working Group
5 Presentation.pdf

WG5 Adopted
Documents 2023.rar

ANNEX 7: WG6 REPORT

EACO WG 6 Report
.pdf

WG6 Adopted
Documents June 2023

ANNEX 8: WG7 REPORT

Report of EACO WG
07- E-waste Managen

ANNEX 9: WG1 (Databank) REPORT

Presentation of the
Chair Databank.pdf