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Communications to All in East Africa

GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM FOR REGULATORS 9TH – 12TH JULY 2018

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

REGULATORY ASSOCIATIONS (RA) MEETING

Overview of EACO Activities and Plans

1.0   Introduction

A decision to establish a permanent secretariat of ICT Ecosystem in the EAC region was made by the 19th Congress of EACO held in 2010 - Bujumbura, Burundi. Rationale behind this decision being to establish a permanent administrative unit that would effectively coordinate EACO's programmes between Congresses and follow up implementation of the Congress decisions which would result into a more effective outcomes. Broad objective of EACO becomes to strengthen and promote cooperation among the five (currently six) EAC Member States through the development and provision of telecom, postal and broadcasting services in East Africa. The membership of EACO is comprised of ICTs National Regulatory Authorities; Sector members who consist of operators in the postal, telecommunications and broadcasting sectors who are licensed to provide communication services in any of the EAC Partner States and Associate members who consist of the Academia and other organizations whose objectives are in line with or support those of EACO. Currently, EACO has more than 70 members and 20 partners.

In particular, NRAs provides the mainstay for the EACO and most of the on-going projects are greatly supported by Regulators.

2.0   On going Activities/projects through RAs

EACO's philosophy is that, approaching the Regional issues and solving problems through a regionally coordinated approach yield greater impact that transform and provide solutions to many members and consumers of ICT services. In particular, for example; specific objectives of EACO include harmonisation of ICT Policy and regulatory frameworks in the East African region; promoting development of broadcasting, postal and telecommunications/ICTs and at the same time devising ways and means to achieve fast, reliable, secure, affordable and efficient communication services within the EAC region. EACO has found the importance and necessity to get integrated itself in the Regional Economic Community structures as an effective way to get the resultant works having propellant enforcement for implementation by the RECs partner states. Currently therefore the following projects are being implemented under EACO's coordination and championed by National Regulatory Authorities.

2.1   Cross-border Frequency Coordination

Following approval of the Cross border Coordination Frame work, EACO members carried out mobile cross boarder coordination activities for all six countries of EAC. This collaborative exercise has had very encouraging results

and successful activity being coordinated by EACO. Coordination's have started yielding positive results including minimizing much of interferences and forced roaming near borders. The implementation of frame work for FM sound Broadcasting services at borders is ongoing.

2.2 Harmonized Short Code

EACO has been following up the implementation of short codes used by users to access common services in the region, i.e., 123, 130, 131, 100, 112, 116, 110, 121, 17x. Most countries have implemented this codes.

2.3 E-waste Management Strategy

With thorough participation and strong support of NRAs, EACO has been able to establish a regional structure for e-Waste management. We have been able to sponsor establishment of National e-waste Steering Committees for each individual member States and we have created the Regional Steering Committee on the same. To-date, EACO Working Group 7: E-Waste & Counterfeit Gadgets Management and together with other associates have been able to develop the **Regional E-Waste Management Strategy**, July 2017. EACO is currently mobilizing resources to be able to implement this Strategy. Already some development partners, such as GIZ have committed to fund some activities in the plan.

2.4 EACO Regional Databank

Asymmetry of information and data for planning purposes is a historical and an embarrassing scenario. The need for data in the knowledge society and an Information age is as necessary as the access itself. EACO recognize this necessity hence through Working Group 2: Infrastructure development, Connectivity, Sharing and Digital Inclusion has developed the Regional DATAFRAME in view to establish a reliable, accessible to important data and information on the Regional status on ICTs development and service adoption in its own Database to be implemented at its headquarters.

Key benefits from the Database will include but not limited to Analytics for each sector of ICT; automated report generation capabilities; sector projections by service and country; Service rankings and automatically configured to capture data from EACO NRAs systems timely. The Project has been designed and estimated costs given of which EACO is currently mobilizing the resources from development partners for the same. The first phase of the project will start in the 2018/19 financial year.

2.5   One-Area-Network (ONA)

This flagship project from East African Community has had remarkable impact to our people especially those that have implemented fully the ONA Framework. Consultations of the sector stakeholders and regulators coupled with a strong political will from the Heads of States resulted in removal of the call receiver-party-pays and setting of a cap and floor on Roaming traffic (i.e. 0.10 and 0.07 for wholesale and retail respectively) caused the traffic increase in the implementing networks as the population can now afford to make those calls. Currently the framework is implemented by 4 Partner states of the EAC, namely Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan. It is expected that the remaining partner states, Tanzania and Burundi will start implementing the same by December 2018.

3.0   Conclusion

RAs are critical in the ICTs development in every region. Their Independency of operations may increase greatly their effectiveness in pioneering the ICT sector. Availability of support of these initiated projects may mean a lot to generations than the status quo. We believe the ITU legacy can champion the ICTs RAs, RECs and Regional Organization to deliver social economic development.