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## PATRICIA OBO-NAI: THE MOST DECORATED CEO IN GHANA ACCELERATING TECH ADOPTION IN AFRICA

**F**or Africa to achieve its true potential, there's a need for its people to be focused, ambitious and equipped with the necessary digital competencies. Africans need to embrace and acquire the needed knowledge and technical know-how to access digital tools and technologies that can proffer solutions for a vibrant African economy while operating within a regulatory environment that protects the safety and interests of the continent.

This is the driving force of Patricia Obo-Nai, CEO of Vodafone Ghana. Highly ambitious, Patricia is a tech leader with 25 years of experience in the telecommunications industry. She is one of the most influential CEOs in Africa and represents a leading figure in the telecom sector. Her outstanding leadership has been recognised by many including the Mobile Magazine Africa, which named her the "First Lady of Mobile in Africa", describing her as a legend in the African technology and telecoms sector.

Patricia started her career as a Network Planning Engineer with Millicom Ghana Ltd (Tigo) in 2000; rose to become the first female Chief Technology Officer in the country in December 2006.

She joined Vodafone Ghana in 2011 as Technology Director, and she has also served as Director of Fixed Business and Customer Operations and Acting Director of Consumer Business. She was appointed Chief Executive of Vodafone Ghana in April 2019, becoming the first Ghanaian to occupy that role after 10 years of Vodafone's operation in Ghana.

Under her leadership, Vodafone has churned out several winning innovations such as the award-winning free mobile money transfers to all networks – which has been a big winner and shot Vodafone to number two in the mobile money market. Other innovations under her include the Smart Surf router, which is the result of a partnership with Surfline; the very popular 2Mooch Data, Medical Call Centre, the customer

service bot, ToBi, Business Runway, Your Business Online, Red Trader, Virtual Skills Fair, SuperCare and many others which continue to make waves in the industry.

Her performance at Vodafone for years now, plus her exemplary leadership, stands so tall it became proverbial that once she is up for any top award it is a done deal for her, no matter who the competition is.

In Vodafone, Patricia has ensured a highly engaged customer base to keep Vodafone a top mobile operator in Ghana by revenue share.

Operationally, she has led significant growth in key revenue lines as well as improved operating efficiency and profitability for the business through her focus on operational effectiveness.

Her passion for inclusiveness and a purpose-led organisation under the banner has gained wide recognition as evidenced by the numerous awards won by Vodafone.

Patricia is the most decorated CEO in Ghana with over 25 awards, including Africa's Most respected CEO in telecommunications, recipient of CEO of the Year at the Ghana Information Technology & Telecom Awards (GITTA), HR-Oriented CEO of the Year (HR Focus Awards), Ultimate Woman of the Year (Women's Choice Awards), Woman of the Year (EMY Awards), Excellence in Leadership (Ghana Business Awards), Industry Personality of the Year (GITTA), Woman of the Year – Telecoms (Glitz Africa Awards), and Women Leadership Excellence Award (CEO Summit and Awards). She has also consistently featured in annual Africa's Most Influential CEOs' list.

Patricia serves as an Advisory Council Member of the West Africa STEM Hub, an Advisory Board Member of the Global Young Academy, and a board member of the KNUST Engineering Education Project (KEEP) and the KNUST Foundation. She also

serves on the boards of Restoration Community Chapel and Men of Honour, a not-for-profit organisation. She is a member of the Ghana Institute of Engineers and the Executive Women Network.

She holds a BSc in Electrical/Electronic Engineering from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), an Executive MBA in Project Management from the University of Ghana Business School, and has executive education from Kellogg School of Management, London Business School, and INSEAD in France.

She has an Executive MBA in Project Management from the University of Ghana Business School and has executive education from the Kellogg School of Management, London Business School, and INSEAD in France.

Patricia is passionate about the future of young people and women in the digital age and is a vigorous advocate for STEM. She has been on several local and international platforms, including the UN General Assembly panel sessions advocating for youth and women.

In one of her words, she said, *"The tech industry is shaping technology for the future. Gender diversity is fundamental to how you thrive in innovation and how you succeed. But the industry must be very deliberate about how we include this culture at all these levels so that we can get it right."*

"Otherwise, we provide solutions for people and we think that is what they need, while we do not even understand them," she said.

With a clearer career path, no doubt she will remain a leading figure in the tech industry and continue to be a role model for African women.





## VODACOM LAUNCHES UNSECURED PERSONAL LOANS FOR CUSTOMERS

**Mariam Cassim**  
Chief Executive Officer of Vodacom Financial Services

**V**odacom Financial Services has launched VodaLend Compare, a financial services marketplace aimed at offering unsecured personal loans for customers.

Available exclusively through the VodaPay super app for now, with the web version launching soon, the proposition allows customers to compare personal loan quotes in three simple steps, enabling them to apply for the best option that suits their lifestyle needs and budget.

“VodaLend Compare is designed to respond to consumers who may need a financial boost quickly for personal use, such as emergency medical expenses, unplanned relocation costs or home renovations, without a tedious application process. Through one journey and one application, within the VodaPay app, customers are able to immediately access an ecosystem of products that caters for their individual lifestyle needs,” says Mariam Cassim Chief Executive Officer of Vodacom Financial Services.

Vodalend Compare presents customers with up to nine tailored personal loan offers from independent providers and financiers, eliminating the process of submitting multiple applications to a lot of institutions, which can affect the applicant’s credit score. These

include Nedbank, African Bank, Finchoice and Boodle, to name a few.

Quotes are based on an individual risk profile and customer’s affordability, with personal loan products across providers ranging from R500 up to R350 000, and payment terms starting from 3 months up to 72 months. Approved customers may proceed to sign an agreement, and funds will be paid to them within 48 hours of approval.

“Providing customers with unsecured personal loans can help individuals meet their different personal goals and achieve financial freedom more easily, compared to other types of loans where collateral is required as security. Customers also have peace of mind knowing their debt is being serviced through a secure capability offered by the VodaPay environment,” adds Cassim.

The launch of VodaLend Compare follows the launch of VodaLend Business Cash Advance, which advances funds to small- to medium-sized businesses. Both propositions, under the lending arm of Vodacom Financial Services, are simplifying access to funding, which historically is a major economic obstacle for both consumers and businesses.

## WHATSAPP ANNOUNCING NEW PRODUCTS TO MAKE BUSINESS MESSAGING EASIER



**Matthew Idema**  
VP of Business Messaging

**M**ark Zuckerberg announced we’re opening up the new, cloud-based version of the WhatsApp Business Platform, hosted by Meta, to any business across the world. With this new API, we’re offering free, secure cloud hosting services so businesses and developers can easily access our service within minutes, build directly on top of WhatsApp to customize their experience and increase their response time for their customers. So now, whether a business wants to work with one of our 100+ partners or access our service directly, it will be much faster to get up and running on WhatsApp.

When growing a business, you need smart, robust and easy-to-use conversation tools. For smaller businesses using the WhatsApp Business app, we’re building tools so it’s easier to handle an influx of chats as they grow their customer base. Launching Recurring Notifications on Messenger

Today we’re announcing a new way for businesses to keep the conversation going with Recurring Notifications. As businesses acquire new customers and begin to scale operations, there’s incredible opportunity to build loyalty and trust — and we believe this is

where the value of messaging really shines. This new capability makes it easy to re-engage people right in the messaging thread and deliver tailored messaging at the best time for customers, whether to hear about special promotions, new product drops or tips and tricks.

You can choose the topics you’d like to let people opt-in to, how often customers can hear from you and shape your content, so your messages are always on-brand and relevant. Recurring notifications will also be available for businesses on Instagram this fall.

We also highlighted our click-to-message ads to help customers immediately start conversations with businesses, our CRM platform Kustomer and Meta Business Suite for higher volumes of messages across Facebook, Messenger and Instagram. Read more about our product investments in business messaging on our Meta for Developers blog.

## MTN GHANA & VODAFONE GHANA SIGN NATIONAL ROAMING AGREEMENT

**F**MTN Ghana and Vodafone Ghana have announced the significant progress in the bid to implement a national roaming service in Ghana amongst operators. In this regard, MTN Ghana and Vodafone Ghana have entered a strategic partnership to pilot national roaming in the Volta Region as a first step to a broader nationwide national roaming partnership. This agreement will see Vodafone Ghana expand coverage of its network by leveraging MTN’s network infrastructure in this pilot phase.

National roaming implementation in Ghana is intended to facilitate universal access and accelerate digitalization in line with the country’s ambitions of a digital economy. This pilot is a first step to a bigger plan by Government to have a full national roaming regime amongst all operators in the country.

Patricia Obo-Nai, CEO of Vodafone Ghana in a statement said, “The implementation of national roaming will enable Vodafone Ghana customers to stay connected in areas outside our current locations of coverage. This is especially important for rural communities as national roaming invariably provides a greater choice of network providers. We believe strongly that the collaboration in the Volta Region is a positive step, and working together with the Government, the regulator and MTN Ghana, we look forward to extending the national roaming service beyond the Volta Region in due course.”

“This agreement is a milestone for the industry and is in line with our Ambition 2025 strategic intent of “Leading digital solutions for Africa’s progress” CEO of MTN Ghana, Selorm Adadevoh, said.

“MTN fully supports the Government’s National Roaming plans. We acknowledge that national roaming will extend network coverage for Ghanaians nationwide and support the



growth of the Ghana Telecommunications industry. Our Engineers have worked tirelessly to test and develop solutions to various challenges encountered along the journey and we are excited about what lies ahead in this partnership with Vodafone Ghana.” Selorm added.

Over the coming months, the outcome of the pilot would be instrumental in the development of the next phase of the partnership to cover more complex technical configurations for nationwide roaming on either network. We would update the market in due course.

We take the opportunity to thank the National Communications Authority (NCA) for their support and engagement through the process, and for their approval for us to proceed with this pilot. We also thank the Ministry of Communications and Digitalization for putting in place the policy framework to support such a partnership for the industry at this stage of the Ghana Telecommunications industry evolution. We are confident that this is just one of many forward-looking policies to come to safeguard the viability of the industry into the future.

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## 3.5m Unconnected Ghanaians to get internet connection by 2023 ending –Ursula

**T**he about 3.5 million Ghanaians who are yet to be connected to data and voice network will heave a sigh of relieve by the end of next year.

This follows the quest by the Ministry of Communications and Digitalisation to construct and connect some community Information, Communication and Technology centers and cell sites across the country.

According to Minister of Communications and Digitalisation, Ursula Owusu Ekuful, the establishment of more than 2,000 centres and sites is ongoing and on course to make this a reality.

“We are focus to begin and also complete all ICT centers and rural telephony sites across the country to aid the teaching and learning of ICT courses for our girls and the youth. This will be an opportunity for girls and young women in the country to gain knowledge and be exposed to ICT”, she mentioned while giving a keynote address to climax the National Girls in ICT programme on the Techiman Campus of the Valley View University in the Bono East Region.

As we have been told, the theme for this year is “access and safety”. This theme is very apt

because not all our communities have access to platforms that will help in the knowledge acquisition of our young girls”, she added.

To address the access issue in Ghana, the Ministry through GIFEC is implementing our rural telephony and digital inclusion project which will see the construction of more than 2,000 sites for voice and data connectivity nationwide. Over 700 sites are already being built since 2020 and many communities been connected and benefiting as we speak.

“By the end of next year, all the sites would be completed and connected for some 3. 5 million Ghanaians who are currently not connected to experience the wonders of digital technology” she assured.

Since the beginning of the celebration in 2012, this is the first time about five regions are celebrating the programme separately in a year. A development the minister describes as exceptional.

One hundred girls from all the 11 districts received laptops, whilst some also received cash awards and incentives for their schools, including coding clubs, fully furnished ICT laboratories, among others.

Mrs. Owusu-Ekuful urged the Regional Coordinating Council to take ownership of the facilities and ensure that proper maintenance is done for them to serve their purpose.

Some best performing teachers and regional officers also received laptop rewards for their efforts.



**Babatunde Irukera**  
Executive Vice-Chairman/Chief Executive Officer  
of the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection  
Commission, FCCPC (formerly Consumer Protection Council)

## NDPB & FCCPC Establish Joint Desk to Strengthen Data Protection

**T**he Nigerian Data Protection Bureau (NDPB) and Federal Competition and Consumer Protection (FCCPC) have established Joint Mutual Enforcement Desk (JED) to strengthen data protection and privacy in Nigeria.

The commission and Bureau had on May 17, established the JED as part of their collaboration, considering the mutuality of both agencies’ objectives and mandates.

This was disclosed in a statement issued by Babatunde Irukera, executive vice chairman/ chief executive officer of FCCPC, as both agencies acknowledged that digital markets strengthen economies and can promote shared prosperity, where properly regulated.

“The JED will address crucial issues of data protection and the rights of data subjects to ensure consumers and businesses

derive the protection and benefits that are inherent in the economic expansion that technology and digital markets otherwise enhance,” the statement said.

In 2019, the Federal Government enacted the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR) in furtherance of prevailing national and international instruments and protocols to protect citizens.

In February 2022, the Nigerian Data Protection Bureau (Bureau) was created as an enforcement mechanism of the NDPR.

Key mandates of the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (Commission) include protection of consumers, and their privacy, enforcement of enactments, (including NDPR) for such protection; as well as regulation of competition, including the appropriation of data.



**Isa Ali Pantami**  
Director General of the National Information  
Technology Development Agency

**T**he Nigerian Government has approved tax reliefs for tech startups to encourage and support the development and growth of more Innovation-Driven Enterprises.

This was disclosed by Nigeria’s Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Isa Ali Pantami on Sunday.

According to the statement, the tax reliefs and incentives would help to create millions of jobs in the country.

Pantami said the initiative is part of a number of the proposed strategies made at an interactive forum held on 22nd February 2022 when he led a Federal Government delegation on a working visit to the Lagos digital innovation ecosystem.

“This will also help to develop innovative solutions to societal problems, and rapidly grow, as well as diversify the Nigerian economy, in line with the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy for a digital

## Nigerian Govt. Approves Tax Reliefs for Tech Startups to Boost Digital Economy

Nigeria,” the statement read. “Nigeria’s startup ecosystem attracted about 35 per cent (estimated at \$1.4billion) of the over \$4billion raised by African startups, which is the highest raised by any startup ecosystem on the continent.

“The Nigeria Startup Bill was earlier approved by the Federal Executive Council and forwarded to the National Assembly and the process is about 90% complete.

“The approval of the incentives at the council will consolidate the gains recorded for far in the NSB process.

“The implementation of the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy emphasises the importance of the innovation and startup ecosystem to the development of an indigenous digital economy.”

Pantami added the government would continue to position Nigeria to develop the tech ecosystem to transform Nigeria into a country with a sustainable and thriving digitaleconomy.



## Nigeria: FG Unveils Digital Lab to Drive Startups, Innovation Hubs

**Inuwa Kashifu Abdullahi**  
Nigerian Technology Expert,  
Skilled Technocrat and Transformational Leader

**T**he Federal Government has launched Nigeria’s first digital fabrication laboratory (FABLAB 1.0).

The project is in line with the implementation of the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (NDEPS) and drive the implementation of ideas and innovation that serve all the entities within an ecosystem.

FABLAB has state-of-the-art equipment that includes Printed Circuit Board (PCB) production equipment, Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machines, 3D printers, servers, Graphics processing units (GPUs), and other things.

At the commissioning on Friday, Kashifu Abdullahi, the director-general of the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), said the FATLAB was part of the agency’s effort to make Nigeria an innovation hub.

Abdullahi added that the FABLAB would encourage all digital innovators and makers to drive their ideas from inception to impact.

“The FABLAB maintains an open access policy to allow it serve as a digital innovation accelerator for all innovators and makers.

“It allows open-production and public access to aid innovation and entrepreneurship activities,” he said.

He added that the centre engages in hands-on digital fabrication, skills training and capacity building for both in-house staff and external participants in line with its policies.

According to him, to further boost digital innovation awareness among Nigerian youths, visitation and tour of the lab facility by schools, universities, and research centres is encouraged.





## Ghana: Bboxx Acquires Ghana's PEG Africa and Pushes Valuation to \$300m+

**B**boxx, a London-headquartered cleantech startup that provides clean energy in Africa, has reportedly acquired PEG Africa, another cleantech startup based in Accra, in a deal that pushes its valuation to well over \$300 million, according to 2 insiders close to the story.

Though signed paperwork exists, the acquisition is still subject to customary closing conditions, including an agreement with lenders. Where arrangements are concerned, institutional lenders like Nairobi- and London-based Sunfunder and Swiss ResponsAbility, which both finance PEG's operations, will need to take their time to move entities (aka debt) from PEG to Bboxx. These moving parts may take another 3 weeks to go into effect, according to the source.

According to one source, Bboxx's overarching ambition is to become one of the biggest next-generation utility companies in the world. Since Africa is a significant focal point—followed by Asia, which it has expanded

into—Bboxx is ready to consolidate its position by merging with or acquiring existing energy startups.

Bboxx was founded in 2010 by Mansoor Hamayun, Christopher Baker-Brian, and Laurent Van Houcke to bring electricity into homes across Africa through an affordable pay-as-you-go renewable energy supply. The company has since added clean water and clean cooking to its line of offerings. According to our source, Bboxx has helped more than 5 million people access clean energy.

Tracing back the company's traction since inception, to have served more than 5 million people couldn't be a tall order.

The company is present in 7 African countries—Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Rwanda, DR Congo, Togo, Guinea, and Kenya. Bboxx has won grants, secured loans from local and international banks, and raised tens of millions in venture funding. It's also in partnership with several private companies and governments, including DR Congo, which just renewed its partnership last month.



## DIGITAL AFRIQUE PARTNERS EVER MEDICAL TO MODERNISE AFRICA HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY VIA TECHNOLOGY

**D**igital Afrique Telecom (DAT) has partnered with Ever Medical Technologies to improve and disseminate digital medical solutions across the continent. DAT is a pan-african leader in digital services, development, aggregation and hosting of mobile value-added services. Ever is a medical technology solutions provider.

Africa is growing fast, urbanizing, and industrializing. Every country in Africa is working to close the gap on infrastructure. A major part of these efforts is in modernising the healthcare systems. Digital Afrique Telecom is a major player with a wealth of experience in selling and implementing technology solutions in Africa with customers in 20 countries on the continent. Likewise, Ever Medical Technology is a vibrant medical technology company implementing the latest technological advances in cloud and blockchain solutions in Healthcare institutions in Southeast Asia and the United States of America.

Ever Medical Technologies provide a full suite of software solutions for the healthcare industry of digital healthcare including Electronic Healthcare Records applications, healthcare interoperability solutions through a blockchain based health information exchange, data mining and machine learning applications, telemedicine and telepharmacy applications.

Ever Medical Technologies is the perfect platform to allow insurance companies, clinics, hospitals, and governments to seamlessly and

rapidly advance their customers journey and ease back-office processes.

This new partnership is actively coming to life with roadshows starting in 4 countries namely Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Nigeria and Botswana. These roadshows will gradually be expanding to the rest of the continent within a year.

Companies operating in these countries in the insurance and healthcare industry are invited to quickly connect with Digital Afrique Telecom for the benefit of their customers. Ever Medical Technologies innovative solutions will naturally maximise efficiency, reduce waste and lower cost for hospitals, patients and payers.

Simplice Anoh, CEO of DAT declared "The Africa healthcare system needs to be modernised. We are proud to participate in accelerating that process through technology with our world class solutions provider with proven track records which can solve challenges for the healthcare industry across Africa. At DAT, we pride ourselves to activate the digital revolution in Africa technology platforms through innovation and we believe Ever is instrumental in achieving this for the healthcare system"

Bhunosich Chomanan, CEO of Ever Medical Technologies, commented on the partnership "We are extremely pleased to join forces with DAT to offer our cutting-edge medical technologies solutions to Africa. Modernising healthcare systems across the globe lies at the heart of our mission and vision and Africa is a continent which cannot be left behind"



## NITDA, NDPB To Build Synergy for Advancing Data Protection In Nigeria

**T**he Nigerian data protection ombudsman, National Commissioner (NC) of the Nigeria Data Protection Bureau (NDPB) and the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) are working on a synergy to promote data protection in Nigeria particularly government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs).

Director General of (NITDA, Kashifu Inuwa Abdullahi while receiving the National Commissioner, NDPB, Dr. Vincent Olatunji and his team on a recent working visit to NITDA, Abuja assured the data regulatory agency that NITDA, which hitherto administer data regulations before the creation of the NDPB, remains committed to data privacy.

The NDPB team lead by Olatunji is seeking the continuous support of the NITDA in order to strengthen the drive for data protection and a 'Digital Nigeria.'

The Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR) of 2019 is the country's principal legislation on data protection. The enforcing agent for the NDPR is the NDPB, created early this year by the government.

By law, all private and public organisations must adhere to the NDPR including carrying out annual data protection compliance audit.

According to the NDPR Performance Report for 2021, Nigeria's nascent data protection industry is on the upswing underscored by growing awareness and regulatory assertiveness by the authorities. There is a positive and remarkable level of compliance by individuals and corporate entities as the Nigeria's data protection industry gathers momentum. "Data privacy audit compliance has grown from zero in 2018 to 635 in 2020 and over 1,230 audit compliance in 202," the report noted.



## airtel Africa Launches Mobile Banking in Nigeria

**A**irtel Africa has joined the mobile banking fray as it announced the start of business for its Nigerian payment service bank unit SmartCash PSB.

Airtel Africa revealed in a stock market statement that subsidiary SmartCash Payment Service Bank has started providing services through selected retail outlets with plans to expand across Nigeria in the coming months.

Payment Service Banks (PSBs) are licensed by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to among other mobile banking services, accept deposits and allow their customers to also operate savings accounts. PSBs' customers include individuals and small businesses. PSBs are also allowed to facilitate cross border remittances using all the channels available within Nigeria.

"This is the beginning of our journey to revolutionise the financial services landscape in the country. The millions of Nigerians who do not currently have access to financial services by delivering current and savings accounts, payment and remittance services, debit and prepayment cards and more sophisticated services," said Airtel Africa CEO Segun Ogunsanya.

MTN Nigeria announced this week the start of its own Momo PSB to widen the competition for Nigeria's unbanked segment where Etisalat with 9PSB and Money Master PSB by Globacom could effectively rework Nigeria's banking landscape. Telcos have a combined subscribers base in excess of 184 million – a strong value that could easily tilt the mobile money market in their favour.



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## OPay Partners Mastercard to 'open up e-commerce to Millions' in Africa

**M**erchants and consumers from Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Morocco, Nigeria, and South Africa now have another option to make payments worldwide through a Mastercard virtual payment solution powered by Africa focused Fintech firm OPay.

Chinese-backed OPay is considered to be among the continent's biggest payments start-ups. It has now joined forces with a global payments company, Mastercard in a development the two companies say will "open up e-commerce to millions of people" across Africa.

According to a statement released jointly by the companies, the new partnership enables OPay wallet holders to utilise the new Mastercard virtual payment solution to shop at well-known global brands for leisure, travel, accommodation, entertainment and streaming services among others.

As a further disruption, the new offering does not require users to be holders of bank accounts. Small scale business owners will also be able to "purchase from suppliers abroad and pay" though the virtual payment solution.

Kenyans will also be able to utilise the new virtual payments solution that runs on OPay's eWallet platform. Other African companies powering up virtual credit and debit cards include Zambia's Union54.

OPay CEO Yahui Zhou said on Thursday that the partnership with Mastercard enhances the Fintech's "journey to promote financial inclusion, helping to open up the global economy to more consumers and businesses" across the African continent.

Amnah Ajmal, executive vice president for market development in the MEA region at Mastercard EEMEA, said, "Our partnership with OPay demonstrates our commitment to supporting payments providers across the world to create an interconnected global payments ecosystem that benefits an array of consumers with unique needs."

OPay launched operations in 2018 and said it has signed up 15 million users across Africa. Nigeria represents its biggest market boosted by the absence of mobile money wallets in prior years.



## Uganda Govt.Partners Airtel, Huawei to Promote Tech Talent

**T**owards promoting tech innovative talent for an enhanced digital economy, the government of Uganda has entered into a MoU with Huawei to provide adequate skills, training and certification courses such as 5G, AI, cloud, security, data communications and others that are required by employers to Uganda Institute of Communication Technology (UICT) students and ICT officers.

Uganda's Minister of ICT and National Guidance Chris Baryomunsi.Uganda's Minister of ICT and National Guidance Chris Baryomunsi.

Uganda's Minister of ICT and National Guidance Dr Chris Baryomunsi launched what is described as a talent cultivation partnership MOU between his Ministry and Huawei.

According to the agreement Huawei will provide; staff professional development, sharing of the latest educational materials and resources on latest technologies, exchange of publications and other materials of common interest and promote unified international standards that govern cybersecurity for emerging technologies.

Dr. Baryomunsi said, "This is highly welcomed as it is geared towards skilling of both students and ICT Officers with aim of equipping them with the right skills, competencies to manage, support and ensure that ICT delivers business value."

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of ICT Dr Aminah Zawedde added: "This engagement is to provide quality education and skills aligned to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Africa's Agenda 2063, Uganda Vision 2040, NDP III 2020/21 – 2024/25, National ICT Policy and achievement of NDP III Digital Transformation Programme and Development of an agile ICT-Human Resource Capital etc."

Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) Executive Director Eng Irene Kaggwa Sewankambo said that the Huawei ICT Academy initiative is fulfilment of the Commission's vision to drive the development of a robust communication sector in Uganda.

Huawei Managing Director Gaofei called for urgent need to reform traditional teaching content and focus more on cutting edge technologies because that's what the industry wants.

"It's important to note that as digitisation accelerates in various industries, colleges and universities urgently need to reform traditional teaching content and focus more on cutting-edge technologies, ensure that courses keep up with the times, guarantee that teaching materials are related to industry practices, and help students become more employable."

## Elon Musk's Twitter Deal Poses the Multi-Billion-Dollar Question to Companies: Public V. Private?

*Article by Rialto Markets*

**E**lon Musk's proposed \$44 billion swoop on Twitter has highlighted a growing debate on the merits of companies staying or going private.

For now, the Tesla and SpaceX boss – and world's richest man (\$244 billion) – is said to have gone cool on taking over the social media platform.

Speculation here ranges from Musk recoiling from the pressure his eye-watering proposal is placing on Tesla's stock, to claims that he aims to secure Twitter for much less than his original headline-grabbing offer.

Neither changes the fact that he vowed to take Twitter private if the deal goes ahead, prompting comment from progressive broker-dealer Rialto Markets, which is masterminding the rise of many successful high-growth companies who have no intention of 'going public'.

Rialto Markets CEO and Co-founder Shari Noonan said: "Staying private delivers a flexibility that has been supercharged by crowdfunding from smaller investors and accredited investors who readily 'buy in' to a firm's products or ethos, enabling company expansion free from potential constraints by big corporate shareholders or VCs and public scrutiny of their accounts and plans.

Noonan, who has just received the prestigious Instinet Positive Change Visionary Award at the 2022 Markets Choice Awards in New York, highlighted the electric vehicle company, ATLIS, which Rialto Markets helped to crowdfund \$30 million during its crucial start-up phase.

It has also enabled crowdfunding for Digital Twin pioneer, Cityzenith, whose futuristic tech helps real estate owners and

even whole cities cut their carbon emissions and running costs dramatically.

"In both cases, and typical of the new breed of companies liberated by the 2012 JOBS Act and its crowdfunding opportunities, ATLIS and Cityzenith have built investor communities who know they can offload their holdings for potential profit eventually, through a secondary market platform like our own ATS (automatic trading system).

"Public ownership puts other strong hands on the company in the form of major corporate investors, who must then be kept on board with the management's business strategy.

"This isn't always popular with visionary and entrepreneurial CEOs who want flexibility, particularly in the fast-moving tech sector.

"When Elon Musk announced his abortive plan to take Tesla private in 2018, he said this would enable it to be 'free from as much distraction and short-term thinking as possible'.

"In Twitter's case, he will see that the social platform went public in 2013 – for what then seemed a colossal \$1.8 billion – but returned profits in 2018 and 2019 only.

"Though this makes his multi-billion dollar offer even more staggering, Musk must surely see greater profit potential for Twitter.

"The key stat is Twitter's user base: less than 220 million, tiny against Facebook's at around three billion or even TikTok's one billion, but it must be argued that Twitter punches well above its weight in terms of influence so there is surely scope to boost numbers and, therefore, advertising revenues.

"All of which supports his intent to go private if his takeover succeeds: it means he doesn't have a potentially powerful gang of shareholders who might slow his plans to change Twitter by say, insisting on an immediate drive for profitability when he prefers to play a longer game for greater rewards."

Noonan added that it was not unusual for major public companies to go private, often to recover momentum away from alleged short-termism imposed by shareholders.

The computer giant, Dell went private from 2013-2018 to enable it to "be even more flexible and entrepreneurial" according to Founder Michael Dell, while the Hilton global hotel chain re-structured and expanded as a private company from 2007-2013.

Noonan added that private status also freed a company from the need to report its financial documents and other developments to the US Securities & Exchange Commission, which then become public information and available to scrutiny by competitors and other interested parties – perhaps would-be buyers, welcome or hostile.

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# NCA COMMEMORATES 2022 WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SOCIETY DAY (WTISD) UNDER THE THEME "DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR OLDER PERSONS AND HEALTHY AGEING"

The National Communications Authority (NCA) joined the rest of the world in commemorating this year's World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) under a global theme, "Digital Technologies for Older Persons and Healthy Ageing".



**Director General of the NCA, Mr. Joe Anokye, delivering a welcome address**

According to the Director General of the NCA, Mr. Joe Anokye, the theme for this year's celebration was significant and timely as very little attention has been paid to this theme. He indicated that there is a vast potential to develop and advance in various areas including investment in intelligent devices which target the growing population of the country as well as older persons. This, he said, will increase older people's autonomy and mobility resulting in happier, healthier ageing.

Mr. Anokye stated that the Government of Ghana and the Ministry of Communications and Digitalisation (MOCD) have anchored digitalisation as a key policy objective and have also initiated several programmes within the different sectors of Ghana's economy tailored at bridging the digital divide. He added that the policies are what make technological innovations possible in all fields including finance, health care and education.



**Deputy Minister for Communications and Digitalisation, Hon. Ama Pomaa Boateng, delivering a keynote address**

In her keynote address, the Deputy Minister for Communications and Digitalisation, Hon. Ama Pomaa

Boateng, speaking on behalf of the Sector Minister, Hon. Ursula Owusu-Ekuful, stated that digital tools have become indispensable in our society such that the digital inclusion of all persons have become necessary. Hon. Boateng noted that "since 2017, the MoCD, with the support of His Excellency, the President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and His Excellency, the Vice President, Dr. Mahamadu Bawumia, has embarked on an ambitious infrastructure development programme for the ICT sector as part of efforts to support the digitalisation of the economy".

She further indicated that these digital foundations are being laid for digitalisation to thrive and support services that will enhance healthy ageing. She pointed out that a number of Service Providers providing e-health services and e-commerce in the country have employed Artificial Intelligence and ICT for efficient and effective services delivery.



**The Board Chairman of NCA, Mr. Emil Osei Bonsu, delivering a speech**

The Board Chairman of NCA, Mr. Emmil Osei -Bonsu Jnr., in a speech read on behalf of the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), outlined how digital technology aided the livelihood of everyone during the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. He added that the day marks the founding of ITU and reiterated that WTISD 2022 presents an unprecedented opportunity to bridge cycles of exclusion and accelerate digital transformation in our society.

The Head of the Office and Representative of UNESCO to Ghana, Mr. Abdourahamane Diallo, was also present to deliver the message of the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres. Mr. Guterres on the other hand was of the view that New technologies, from 5G and big data to cloud computing and artificial intelligence, are powerful tools to tackle the world's most pressing challenges, including the pandemic. According to him, "leaving no one behind means leaving no one offline. World Telecommunication and Information Society Day reminds us that international cooperation on digital technology is essential to help defeat COVID-19 and achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", he concluded.

## AVANTI COMMUNICATIONS AND FREE IN SENEGAL SIGN LANDMARK AGREEMENT TO BUILD AND HOST NEW HYLAS 4 SATELLITE GATEWAY IN SENEGAL

Avanti Communications ("Avanti") and Free in Senegal has announced a five-year partnership agreement under which Free in Senegal will build and host a new satellite gateway in Senegal for Avanti's HYLAS 4 state-of-the-art Ka-band satellite.

The new gateway will extend the coverage of Avanti's latest satellite, HYLAS 4, to Senegal and the neighbouring West African countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Gambia and Liberia, as well as completing Avanti's coverage of Ivory Coast. The expanded coverage will significantly increase access to high-speed satellite internet for the countries' schools, hospitals and communities.

The new gateway will also provide satellite backhaul services to Avanti's carrier customers, extending their reach to rural areas and other semi-urban locations where terrestrial networks are currently limited or unreliable.

Free Senegal will build and operate the new gateway from its Tier III data centre facility in Diamniadio outside the capital Dakar, adding Avanti as a strategic customer to its growing enterprise business in Senegal and supporting the Government's Digital Senegal 2025 strategy.

Amongst the many positives of increased connectivity, the partnership is due to make a big impact on education, enabling e-learning services for schools across the region. Pending approval from the Senegalese authorities, the gateway is planned to go live in December 2022.

Kyle Whitehill, CEO of Avanti Communications, commented: "This strategic partnership with Free in Senegal demonstrates our commitment to working with local partners in Africa such as Free in order to increase the coverage of our satellite fleet – benefitting countries and territories that are often overlooked when it comes to high-speed broadband. We are looking forward to working with the Free team to make this vision a reality."

Mamadou Mbengue, CEO of Free in Senegal, added: "We are delighted that Avanti has chosen Free to be their gateway partner in Senegal, recognising the capabilities offered by the Free team and our data centre facility in Diamniadio. This agreement between Avanti and Free to build the gateway and provide Ka-band satellite coverage across Senegal and the neighboring countries is a major milestone in our digital transformation agenda."



**Kyle Whitehill**  
Avanti CEO and Vice-chairman of ESOA



**A group photograph of some participants with Deputy Minister for Communications and Digitalisation**



# DANBATTAPPLAUDS PANTAMI'S APPOINTMENT AS WSIS CHAIR



**T**he Executive Vice Chairman of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), Prof. Umar Garba Danbatta, has congratulated the Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Prof. Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami, on his appointment as the Chairman of the 2022 World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) Forum by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

Danbatta described the choice of the Minister as Chair of the Forum as a worthy recognition of Nigeria's leadership role in the global digital economy ecosystem, noting that Nigeria has continued to hold a front-row seat in the promotion of information and communication technology (ICT) as a driving force for national development since the assumption of office of the Minister.

"On behalf of the Board, Management and Staff of the Nigerian Communications Commission, I

want to express our profound delight and congratulations to the Honourable Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Prof. Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami, on his well-deserved appointment by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to chair this year's WSIS Forum", Danbatta stated.

"The appointment did not surprise us at NCC, given the important role the Hon. Minister has been playing in driving fundamental digital economy policies, being implemented by agencies under his supervision, in order to boost the diversification policy of the Federal Government," the EVC said.

"We are, therefore, happy to associate with the Minister on this feat, as it means greater recognition for Nigeria. The appointment is an indication that the world has continued to take notice of the giant strides of Nigeria's digital economy under the supervision of the Minister.

The NCC will continue to do everything within its regulatory mandate to further support the Federal Government's drive for ubiquitous, affordable and accessible digital services across all nooks and crannies of the country," Danbatta said. Following consultations with various stakeholders, the ITU recently notified the Minister via a letter, of his appointment as the 2022 WSIS Chairman.

The ITU is organising the WSIS 2022 Forum in collaboration with other agencies with the United Nations with a focus on "ICTs for Well-Being, Inclusion and Resilience: WSIS Cooperation for Accelerating Progress on the SDGs".

As has been noted elsewhere, the appointment of Prof. Pantami has given Nigeria, and indeed, the African continent, the unique role of coordinating the activities of the WSIS in its 20th year, following the WSIS Phase I meeting which took place in 2003.



## MTN ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF NEW EXECUTIVE FOR THE ENTERPRISE BUSINESS UNIT

**M**TN Group is pleased to announce the appointment of Tumi Chamayou as Group Executive: Enterprise Business Unit (GBU), effective 1 June 2022.

Tumi joined the GBU team in 2018, as General Manager for Large Enterprise Sales, and has been Acting Executive for the function since July 2020, until now. During this time, she has added immense value, overseeing client segment teams as well as the overall strategy and operational alignment with EBU teams in MTN's OpCos.

Jens Schulte-Bockum, Group Chief Operating Executive said, "Tumi has the expertise and track record to assist in bolstering the leadership capability of MTN Group. Critical to the realisation of

our strategic imperatives is an integrated, synergistic, and collaborative leadership team whose core values and mindset are aligned with the company's strategy. We look forward to working with Tumi in her new role".

Tumi is a seasoned professional with extensive experience in technology, telecommunications, and management consulting. Prior to joining MTN, she held various senior leadership roles at Ericsson, Egon Zehnder, Accenture and Decipher.

Tumi holds an MBA from the University of the Witwatersrand and a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science from the University of the Western Cape in South Africa.



## Elon Musk's Firm, Starlink, Gets ISP Licence to Operate in Nigeria

**T**he world's richest man, Elon Musk has revealed that the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has issued its firm, Starlink Internet Limited, with two licences to operate in Nigeria.

Starlink Internet Limited, which is operated by SpaceX, will be trading as Starlink Internet Services Nigeria Limited. The company received the two licences, which include the International Gateway licence and Internet Service Provider (ISP) licence, after months of negotiations with the NCC. Musk, via his Twitter handle, said NCC had confirmed and approved the two licences, before issuing Starlink the operational licences.

The licensing followed a visit to Nigeria by the company's team in May last year. Starlink offers satellite internet access coverage to 32 countries where its use has been licensed. It also provides high-speed, low-latency broadband internet across the globe.

Within each coverage area, orders are fulfilled on a first-come, first-served basis. The International Gateway licence has a 10-year tenure while the ISP licence is to last for five

years. Both licences take effect from May 2022 and may be renewed after the expiration. With high speeds and latency as low as 20 minutes in most locations, Starlink enables video calls, online gaming, streaming, and other high data rate activities that historically have not been possible with satellite internet.

Users also have the option to take Starlink with them via the Portability feature or Starlink.

In May last year, Starlink's Market Access Director for Africa, Ryan Goodnight along with SpaceX consultant, Levin Born, had paid a visit to the NCC where they expressed interest to obtain a licence to operate the satellite internet in the country.

After SpaceX representatives provided an overview of its plans, expectations, licensing requests, and deployment phases, the Executive Vice-Chairman, NCC, Prof. Umar Danbatta, represented by the Executive Commissioner, Technical Services, NCC, Ubale Maska, had promised that the NCC would work on necessary modalities to ensure that it balanced the need for healthy competition vis-a-vis the entry of new technologies, to protect all industry stakeholders.





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