



## PRESS RELEASE

### Kenya Wins Top Africa ICT seat

*Nairobi, 17<sup>th</sup> August 2018:* Kenya's Mr. John Omo has today been elected the new Secretary General of the African Telecommunications Union (ATU).

Mr. Omo garnered 23 votes beating his sole challenger; Burundi's Mr. Constaque Hakizimana who managed two (2) votes at elections held today during the 5<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the ATU Plenipotentiary conference in Nairobi.

In his acceptance speech Mr. Omo said he was truly humbled by the trust that the continent has bestowed on him to steer the region on the pathway of development of ICTs.

"I am very humbled, and at the same time, honoured and privileged to be entrusted with such a great responsibility that comes with the position of Secretary General of this great Union," said an emotional Mr. Omo.

He said his work has been cut out and called on all member states to support him in his quest of rebuilding the ATU and positioning it as the sole united voice on matters of ICT on the continent.

"Work for me begins now. I have shared my vision for ATU with you and I commit to pursue it. I feel encouraged by commitments of Member States as well as the current leadership of this esteemed body," said Mr. Omo.

In achieving his new mandate, Mr. Omo will be leveraging on the foundation already established by his predecessor Mr. Abdoukarim Soumaila to ensure the continent reaps the massive benefits ICTs present for the region's socio-economic development.

"I undertake to build on the good work of my predecessor to take this organization to the next level," added Mr. Omo.

Thanking the delegates for voting Kenya's candidate, ICT Cabinet Secretary Mr. Joe Mucheru said Kenya remains on the forefront in supporting the activities of the ATU and will support Mr. Omo in his tenure.

"We are humbled by the support you have given to us. We will continue to give support to ATU to see get the dividends of ICT on the continent. We will work together irrespective of how we voted," said Mr. Mucheru.

Prior to today's elections Nigeria and the Republic of Congo had also fielded candidates for the post. In Nigeria's case, the Minister of Communications Barrister Adebayo Shittu withdrew their candidate Dr. Abubakar Sadiq Hussaini at the eleventh hour.

The Republic of Congo's candidate Dr. Eric Ndoumba was declared ineligible due to the fact that the country was in arrears in its membership contribution to ATU. Only countries that have honoured their financial obligations to ATU are allowed to vote or field candidates.

Earlier in the day the delegates endorsed Kenya to continue the temporary hosting of the ATU headquarters for the next four years, until a decision is made on the permanent location of the Union's seat.

The ATU was originally based in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) but was relocated to Kenya in 1999 due to the prevailing political instability.

It was expected that the Plenipotentiary Conference would ratify a proposal to have the seat permanently hosted in Kenya, but the DRC put up a spirited push today, requesting for more time to prepare to host the seat.

### **About Mr. John Omo**

*Mr. John Omo is a distinguished lawyer with over 25 years experience in international legal advisory roles, 18 of which are in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector, in Kenya, regionally and globally. He is currently the Director for Legal Services at the Communications Authority of Kenya (CA), the country's ICT regulator.*

*In his current capacity, Mr. Omo is responsible for providing strategic leadership over the Communications Authority's legal policies and activities. These include, but are not limited to, provision of expertise; development of legislation; preparation and presentation of national positions at treaty-making, multilateral and bilateral negotiations. He also oversees the implementation of international obligations at the national level.*

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