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The latest in Telecom, ICT and SatCom sectors of the Middle East, Asia and Africa



SAMENA Leaders' Summit
Visualizing the impact of 5G in the region



A new record for excellence with
6 trophies at the Dubai Lynx

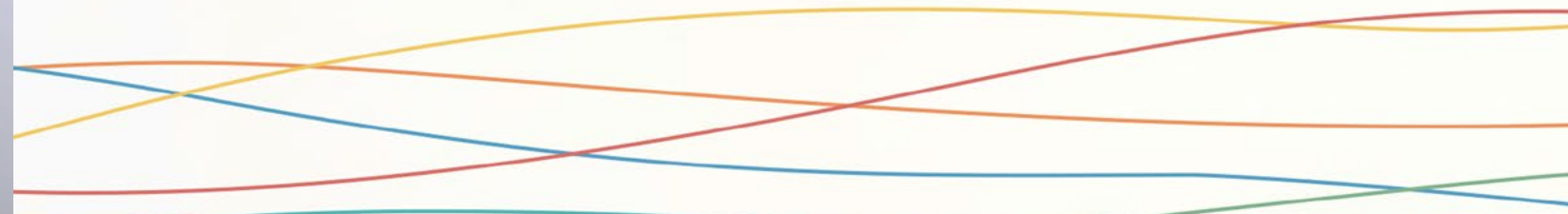


SAMENA Telecommunications Council
TELECOM LEADERS' SUMMIT 2019

Huawei 5G Forum

🕒 Thursday 18th April, 2019

📍 Atlantis, The Palm – Dubai, UAE





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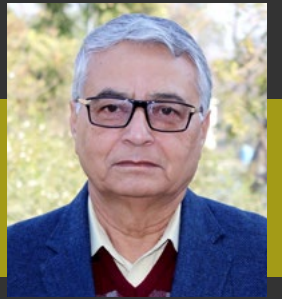


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Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the latest edition of Teletimes International.

This month brings our attention to SAMENA Telecom Council's annual Telecom Leaders' Summit which is set to take place in Dubai on 18th April. The Telecom Leaders' Summit will bring together industry leaders and senior executives from the entire telco space in the middle east and beyond. Hosted for the sixth consecutive year by Huawei Technologies Middle East, Co-Sponsored by Sudatel Group and Ericsson Middle East, and other leading names in the industry, the one-day leaders-only congregation, the Leaders' Summit 2019, will continue its tradition of bringing change-makers from the private and public domains together, with the purpose of addressing the Industry's most pressing issues and paving the path for materializing potential collaborative undertakings among the private and government sector stakeholders. Teletimes is the official Media Partner to SAMENA Council for the last 14 years. I will be present at the event with the editorial team and I look forward to meeting our partners and contributors at the event.

In other highlights, the UAE has been ranked as a global leader in Fiber Optic Network for a third year in a row with rightful credit to the telecom operators and regulatory authority of the UAE. You can read more details about the news inside.

5G has lately been the highlight for everything in telecom for some time now. As the operators race on a towards deploying 5G, STC makes one further step forward by making MENA's first 5G call. You will find more on 5G in this edition.

As always, you will also find the latest news related to other ICT subjects and major players across the region in this edition. We appreciate having your feedback on info@teletimesinternational.com

Enjoy Reading!

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5G: A true accelerator of digital transformation

Charles Yang

President of Huawei Middle East speaks to Teletimes

Interview: Khalid Athar

Khalid Athar: How does the transition from 4G to 5G compare to the transition from 3G to 4G?

Charles Yang: Comparing the move from 3G to 4G, transition from 4G to 5G is happening faster. In order to achieve 500M users, it will take 9 years for 3G and 6 years for 4G, but for 5G, we think it will take only 3 years.

First, it is because global operators have agreed on one unified 3GPP standard for 5G. Instead of choosing their sides as they have done in the 3G to 4G transition, 5G adoption has a clearer roadmap.

Second, the development of 5G devices is also happening faster than expected. According to GSA, there are already 5 chipset vendors and 33 5G devices that have been announced up to date. In fact, it is the first time in the history of mobile communications that the 5G networks and terminals grow mature at the same time.

Third, the 5G use cases are growing mature. Today, there are already two mature 5G use cases. Aside from eMBB service via 5G smartphone, the maturity of air fiber technology will even protect the 5G investment of the operators. More and more use cases, such as AR/VR, drone and even vehicle, are developed rapidly and the launch of 5G will even accelerate the growth of these use cases.

In short, all the factors that 5G needs are ready now, thus the development of 5G network is going super-fast and out of expectation. On 4th of April, Korea already launched its national 5G service. LG U+ will have its 50,000 5G sites on air within this year. Meanwhile, China CMCC has started building 500,000 5G sites to be completed by 2020. Over 35 operators have chosen Huawei to launch their 5G commercial deployment and there are more than 45,000 5G base stations that have been shipped.

KA: How do you think 5G is going to impact the Middle East market?

CY: 5G is the basic infrastructure of the intelligent society in the future. Just Like the transformation brought by electricity to society over one hundred years ago, 5G will bring a revolutionary change to the future of information society.

The impact of 5G on the Middle East region can be described from three aspects:

First, at a national level, 5G is one of the major enablers of the implementation of national vision plans, which will promote economic growth and open new jobs.

Second, at an industry level, 5G will promote digital transformation among industries and improve their overall efficiency, similar to what computer science brought us in the past three decades.

Third, at a carrier level, with 5G, carriers can enter the vertical business domain from pure communications service providers, and have the potential to become a new service platform provider and gain more business opportunities.

This year, operators in the GCC countries are all gearing up for 5G launches. Many operators have announced their plans to deploy large scale network. These 5G networks will bring positive impact on the GCC in the coming years.

KA: What do you think unique value of 5G that is encouraging operators to deploy the network in the initial phase?

CY: There are 3 business value pillars of deploying 5G in this early phase:

1- "4G-5G" Dual model can significantly improve upfront investment efficiency: benefiting from dynamic sharing technologies such as "CloudAIR", operators can reduce bandwidth cost of traditional MBB services significantly, as investing in 5G



CY: 5G, as the crucial digital service enabler, is able to offer ultra-high-speed (more data) and ultra-low-latency (more responsive) to deliver huge amounts of data collected from more IoT. With this intelligent connectivity (5G, IoT and AI), it will be much easier to handle thousands of devices simultaneously. Currently, there are about 1000 cities around the world that have planned or started to build smart cities. In order for a mobile network to carry the weight of the future smart city, it will require a fast, responsive, as well as stable network like 5G.

There are some key factors to consider in order to ensure that a smart city program is designed to be inclusive of all socio-economic classes. For example when we look at basic needs of access to power, water, food and access to the internet; yes these days access to the internet should be considered a basic need. Our cities can become more resilient in these basic needs by, for example ensuring distributed energy generation requirement for all new building and encouraged for existing real estate stock. This not only ensures resilient supply but also can encourage the sharing economy; which is based on the principle of 'I have, you need'. I. E. I have something of value to trade with you in this case I may generate more energy in my home than I need which I could either sell or gift to others in my neighborhood or beyond. Similar principles can be applied to other resources in the city to ensure better utilization whilst ensuring everyone feels they have a stake in the city.

Regarding access to the internet, it is necessary to ensure digital inclusion, especially in a world where those who have access also have more opportunities. So this levels the playing field, of course broadband access needs to be affordable along with affordable smart phones and devices so that not only city serviced can be accessed more readily but also everyone can participate in the sharing economy. Identity and reputation become critical components for which governments and city authorities play a key role, here again our smart phone becomes a key enabler.

Of course as we digitize and connect more things, security and data center availability also become foundational to city resilience. The ability to have high reliability, scalability and rapid deployment of data centers and the networks connecting them enable a level playing for all residents, businesses and visitors regardless of their socio-economic background. In order to fully release the potential of this intelligent connectivity on a global level, we still have to wait until 5G comes in, and only until then will these industries be able to get a chance to leverage technology.

KA: How do you see the future of the ME telecom market? How does it compare to other regional markets in your opinion?

CY: As industry digitalization develops, 5G will be the fundamental of future society connection for personal, home, and industry. Operators will provide ultra-broadband, low latency, and ubiquitous connection to support the development. The telecom industry will also be developed greatly.

Through the close cooperation between governments entities, operators, vendors and vertical partners, Middle East countries are standing in front at the first wave of 5G commercial launch; meanwhile, standing in front of the world. 🇲🇪

“

Over 35 operators have chosen Huawei to launch their 5G commercial deployment and there are more than 45,000 5G base stations that have been shipped”

equipment also allows operators to serve 4G services.

2- “Fiber from Air” enables new business model: 5G is capable of delivering 100Mbps experience for home users, therefore charging by guaranteed experiences for 5G home broadband users are feasible.

3- 5G paves the road of digitalization for verticals: 5G accelerates the digitization of society. By enabling the diversified ecosystem partners, 5G can improve the quality of communication in all industries, not only human to human, but also machine communication. Despite that we are still in the early stages, we can see that the ecosystem building of innovative solutions has already started by the operators, technology providers, solution developers, and all innovators from all industries.

KA: How will 5G revamp the IoT and AI space and make the smart city vision a reality for all socio-economic classes in the Middle East?



Charles Yang

5G force: Why rapid rollout of 5G connectivity is crucial

The time for 5G is now. Business, standards, products, terminals, and security are fully ready, and a mature 5G ecosystem has emerged. Rapid integration of the next generation of network connectivity could be the turning point for Middle East governments pursuing strategic plans to develop globally-competitive, diversified, knowledge-based economies.

The success of 5G is largely dependent on two elements. Firstly governments, operators and their partners setting up adequate infrastructure, and secondly looking ahead to develop use cases which reach beyond traditional telecommunications services.

Preparing infrastructure for 5G is largely dependent on local governments and operators. Huawei commits to support from a top-level consultative perspective to ensure 5G is achieved with maximum speed and quality, and nurture a 5G ecosystem which will help organizations rapidly capitalize from the commercialization of 5G. Regional governments have demonstrated admirable foresight in prioritizing digitalization to drive forward the next stage of economic development – but challenges remain.

We are using the occasion of the SAMENA Telecom Leader’s Summit 2019 to mitigate doubts operators may have. We want to emphasize the need for early and quick deployment and commercialization of 5G, to outline our capabilities as a brand, as well as demonstrate our vision for the future of 5G.

Eliminating barriers

As we work towards a future fueled by 5G, our focus is on how we can ensure the right foundations are in place to allow maximum benefits and efficiency for our evolving digital economy. We need to eliminate the barriers that would affect us achieving economies of scale, saving costs and increasing productivity, while preparing for major technologies of the future.

5G networks will require a far denser coverage than current networks provide. To this end, infrastructure and set-up must be carried out in an efficient and timely manner. New services that 5G will enable, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and autonomous driving networks, have the potential to drive demand as well as accelerate digitization of the economy. Who benefits from these services and why are operators questioning their investments? To answer this, we must lay out how delayed deployment would impact the economic trajectory for governments and operators, and identify the myriad benefits they would miss.

Essential benefits

The fifth generation will enable a level of mobile connectivity that will power state-of-the-art technologies, such as AI, autonomous transport, cloud computing, and smart home appliances. 5G-enabled digitalization has the power to drive revenues for organizations across vertical sectors, from energy and utilities, to manufacturing, to healthcare, retail, financial services, and more.

For operators, the benefits are also manifold. Denser network



coverage will allow for better faster coverage and more capacity, providing users with a consistent experience and ensuring customer satisfaction. It will also power the Internet of Things (IoT), where devices and systems are interconnected. Huawei has been working with our ecosystem partners to test and validate industry use cases for 5G through our Wireless X Labs. Our research leaves no doubt that while initial investment to networks may be high, their cost will be rapidly recouped through the economic opportunities 5G will bring. We have established a number of special interest groups, including the Digital Sky Initiative, Wireless eHealth, and Connected Factory, to study new commercial applications which will justify investing in network transformation. Our research makes a clear case that organizations across the board will benefit from early investment in 5G, as innovation inspires new growth for enterprises.

Huawei's 5G solution

As our Chief Marketing Officer of Huawei Wireless Solution, Peter Zhou stated: "Huawei is dedicated to taking complexity

and creating simplicity. We are eager to make 5G deployment efficient and convenient through systematic innovation, helping 5G enter the fast track."

Through our lead ranking in the industry we have devoted our efforts to quick and easy deployment. Huawei is leading a global movement to embrace the new era of digitalization 5G is inspiring.

We also prioritize forming key partnerships and working to provide innovative business opportunities for organizations, while looking to the future in terms of growing our AI-enabling intelligence operations.

Above all we want to provide solutions. A key solution to addressing infrastructural and cost issues is through choosing a partner that will facilitate the entire journey, from setting-up base stations to trialing and testing. Huawei is one of the only companies to provide End-to-End 5G solutions and full-lifecycle service capabilities which can be applied across all scenarios. Customized infrastructure tailored to their unique requirements means businesses can modify 5G in their own way towards their desired

outcome.

At Huawei, our primary and unwavering commitment is to maintain customer network stability and security. When it comes to security, we believe the ultimate solution is extensive R&D – this is why in 2018 alone, Huawei invested USD 14.9 billion (14.1% of its sales revenue) in R&D, ranking fifth globally in The 2018 EU Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard.

Over the last ten years, Huawei's R&D expenditure has reached more than USD 70.5 billion. According to official data released by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Huawei filed 5,405 patent applications to this organization in 2018, ranking first among all companies globally.

Bringing digital to every person, home, and organization for a fully connected, intelligent world is Huawei's commitment. On that note I urge regional partners and operators to exercise their vision and work together to deliver 5G faster, making its benefits more widely available so their economic and social impacts can be felt immediately across the Middle East. **T**

Huawei allegations driven by politics not evidence - UN Telecoms Chief

U.S. security concerns about 5G mobile networks built by Chinese telecoms giant Huawei appear to be driven by politics and trade rather than any evidence, the head of the U.N. internet and telecoms agency said. Houlin Zhao, secretary-general of ITU, told reporters in Geneva that security of 5G networks was in everybody's interest but so far he had not seen anything to substantiate claims about Huawei.

“I would encourage Huawei to be given equal opportunities to bid for business, and during the operational process, if you find anything wrong, then you can charge them and accuse them,” the Chinese-born Zhao said. “But if we don't have anything then to put them on the blacklist – I think this is not fair.”

“Those preoccupations with Huawei's equipment, up to now there is no proof so far,” Zhao said.

The United States has urged its allies to ban Huawei from building 5G networks, saying it could be used for espionage. Huawei has rubbished the allegations, saying Washington had a “loser's attitude”.

“I would encourage Huawei to be given equal opportunities to bid for business, and during the operational process, if you find anything wrong, then you can charge them and accuse them,” the Chinese-born Zhao said. “But if we don't have anything then to put them on the blacklist – I think this is not



fair.”

Zhao was speaking on the day South Korea's Samsung Electronics won the race to commercially launch 5G services, saying 5G-enabled smartphone Galaxy S10 would allow games to be played with minimal delay, potentially changing the landscape of the gaming industry. Zhao said it was in the interest of telecoms companies to ensure that they were using secure hardware, because otherwise they could face a challenge by national authorities or a public backlash against using their

services.

“So it's their first concern, their first target, to make sure that the systems they use in the market will provide service satisfaction to them.”

The ITU will hold a meeting in October to finalise standards for the 5G spectrum, but concerns about Huawei will not slow down that process, Zhao said.

The ITU also has a study group of national experts looking into security. **T**

SAMENA Council's Leaders' Summit 2019 to promote proliferation of 5G and help visualize its impact in boosting ICT businesses and innovation

ITU Secretary-General's address during the Summit 2019 to enunciate global collaboration as a necessity for enabling 5G to become driver of the next mobile era



Eng. Nasser Al-Nasser, Chairman, SAMENA Council



Hamad Obaid Al Mansoori, Director General, TRA UAE

Teletimes Report

SAMENA Telecommunications Council has commenced preparatory efforts to hold its annual Leaders' Summit, to be held on April 18th, 2019, with the patronage of Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA) of the United Arab Emirates.

Hosted for the sixth consecutive year by Huawei Technologies Middle East, Co-Sponsored by Sudatel Group and Ericsson Middle East, and other leading names in the industry, the one-day leaders-only congregation, the Leaders' Summit 2019, will continue its tradition of bringing change-makers from the private and public

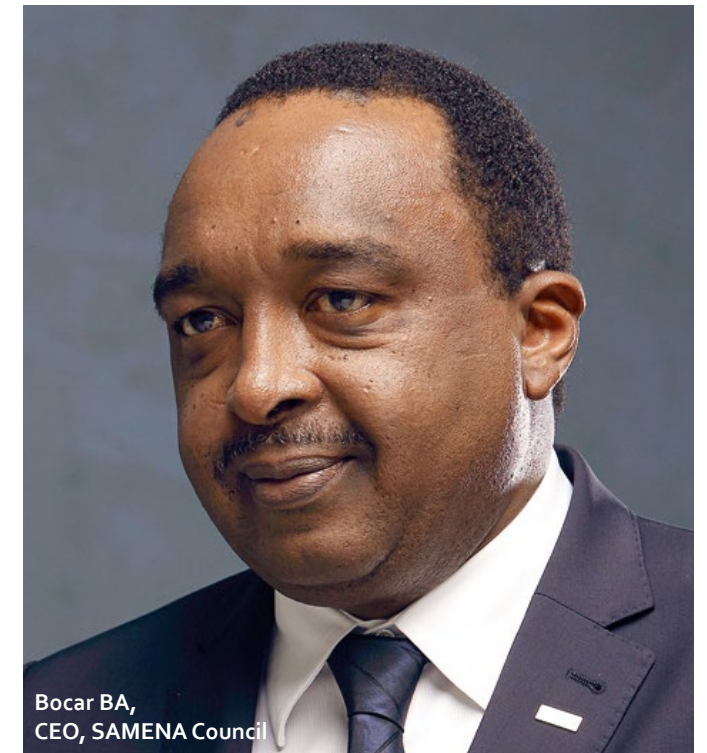
domains together, with the purpose of addressing the Industry's most pressing issues and paving the path for materializing potential collaborative undertakings among the private and government sector stakeholders.

Leaders' Summit 2019 will follow a new organization format, designed to maximize by-invitation-only attendance and to achieve efficacy in the multi-stakeholder discussions, including a closed-door bi-lateral meeting among regulatory authorities, operators, and technology providers.

"We would like to see the proliferation of 5G realized in the region sooner than later and thus our focus during Leaders' Summit 2019 is on understanding the impact of 5G in boosting ICTs and enabling flexibility and enhancing capabilities of new digital services. The areas which require specialized attention are Operators' need for improved spectrum allocation policies, and general regulator-level support for understanding future requirements and multiple dimensions in building the region's digital economy. One of the most anticipated ICT thought leadership and change-makers' events in the region, the



Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General, ITU



Bocar BA, CEO, SAMENA Council

Leaders' Summit 2019 will further empower SAMENA Telecommunications Council to be at the forefront of the campaign for building digital economies, unifying the telecom industry voice, helping optimize the collaboration between operators and regulators and ICT industry service providers towards making a positive impact in the region's socio-economic development. It is SAMENA Council's privilege that the Leaders' Summit 2019 will be held with the patronage of the TRA-UAE and organized in collaboration with the leading private-sector names of the region's digital communications industry", stated Bocar BA, CEO & Board Member of SAMENA Council.

His Excellency Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General of ITU will attend the Leaders' Summit 2019, to delineate the importance of global collaboration for leveraging fifth-generation technologies, in order to catalyze a global change in mobile communications and to foster digital inclusion within the society. Mr. Zhao's participation in SAMENA Council's Leaders' Summit also evidences the ITU's increasing interaction with private-sector decision-makers who use the trusted platforms provided by SAMENA Council to meet like-minded leaders and brainstorm on solutions

to complex industry issues.

Lately, the ITU's focus on promoting global collaborations and enabling developmental efforts within the Industry has intensified, to help ensure fifth-generation technologies receive timely attention of the decision-makers, in order to help nations develop themselves and benefit from the fourth industrial revolution, which is now in play, and to fulfill the goals defined in the UN's sustainability agenda.

"Cross-industry and public-private sector collaboration will be key to deploying 5G networks. With our World Radiocommunication Conference to take place in Sharm el-Sheikh from 28 October to 22 November 2019, ITU is at the heart of this process," said ITU Secretary-General Houlin Zhao. "SAMENA Council is a valued partner of ITU and an influential force in the Arab world, the SAMENA region, and beyond. I look forward to deepening our cooperation on ICT development to ensure that 5G is a source for good for everyone, everywhere."

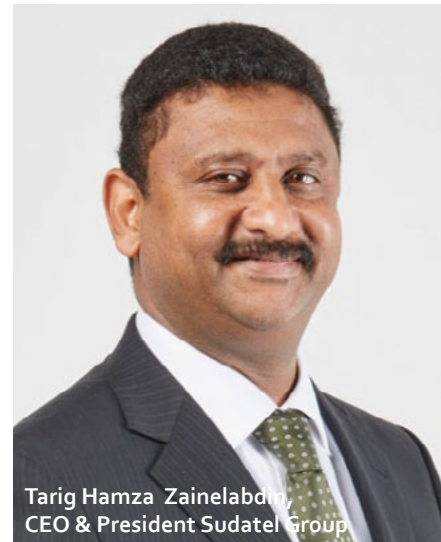
Commenting on the organization of the Summit, H.E. Hamad Obaid Al Mansoori, Director General of the UAE's TRA said: "We in the UAE rely on 5G to enter the age

of the artificial intelligence and to apply the Smart Cities applications such as IoT. 5G will provide a flexible and adaptive intelligent platform to the mobile operators to connect everything and offer unique digital services. 5G will be the innovation engine to empower the 4th industrial revolution. The TRA is creating a coherent environment to nourish and sustain this growth for the people of the UAE". Leaders' Summit 2019 will congregate leaders from more than 29 countries, with the aim of materializing private and government partnerships; for fostering collaboration within the ICT industry of the region; and for discussing issues that have emerged since 5G deployment became a priority in the region, in alignment with national ICT visions.

To accelerate the large-scale deployment of 5G, Huawei will host the "5G is ON Forum" as part of the Summit. The event will be an occasion for 5G industry partners to discuss how emerging 5G-enabled intelligent services and innovations can help operators identify new business opportunities and thereby achieve growth. As an undisputed technology leader and partner of choice for operators launching 5G globally, Huawei will also use the event as a platform to demonstrate how its E2E 5G solutions can



Charles Yang,
President, Huawei MEA



Tarig Hamza Zainelabdin,
CEO & President Sudatel Group



Chafic Traboulsi,
Head of Networks, Ericsson MEA

help the Middle East organizations fully capitalize on the commercialization of 5G.

Charles Yang, President of Huawei Middle East, added: "This year's SAMENA Leaders' Summit especially meaningful to us: 2019 marks Huawei's 6th consecutive year of co-hosting the event, and while in the past we have focused on the imminent arrival of 5G, this year we can say with confidence that the time for large-scale 5G deployment has finally come. Businesses, standards, products, and terminals are fully ready, and a comprehensive 5G ecosystem is emerging. The arrival of 5G will accelerate digital transformation and bring about the all-connected, all-intelligent world, playing a pivotal role in helping regional leaders meet their economic growth targets and national agendas. We are excited to meet with our partners and stakeholders in Dubai to discuss how together we can lead this transformative epoch of digital transformation."

"SAMENA Council is continuing to play a significant role in the ICT sector across its footprint. It helps the ecosystem to better understanding the industry. We do believe that the work undertaken by SAMENA Council is of great value for all the stakeholders. It is a precious platform for networking and sharing ideas, know-how and experience. The Council has evolved, across the years, to become an incubator that proliferates smart and strategic thinking. This annual event of Leaders' Summit is a reflection of how SAMENA Council is convincing and is exercising its influence. Sudatel Group will maintain

its support for SAMENA Council as a recognition of its valuable achievements," stated Tarig Hamza Zainelabdin, CEO & President Sudatel Group, which is among the valued sponsors of the Summit.

"The Middle East and Africa region has a unique opportunity globally when

Huawei will host the "5G is ON Forum" as part of the Summit. The event will be an occasion for 5G industry partners to discuss how emerging 5G-enabled intelligent services and innovations can help operators identify new business opportunities and thereby achieve growth.

it comes to bringing 5G to life. It is undeniable that 5G networks are critical national infrastructure with large impact on society and the competitiveness of countries. As a technology leader and the largest contributor to the standardization body in 3GPP during 2018, Ericsson has made strong R&D investment to provide

competitive solutions and technology that create value for our customers.

According to our recent Mobility Report published in February, 5G is forecast to reach 30 million subscriptions by 2024 in the Middle East and Africa. This draws an exciting outlook for all industry players in the region in terms of new opportunities, new efficiencies, and new business models. We are on the threshold of a global technology shift that is beyond our industry. It is a shift for our entire society and we have built up vast experience and industry-leading capabilities to support new and existing customers in transforming their networks. With our strong and flexible 5G portfolio in place, Ericsson has proved to be a trusted partner for industry players who want to stay ahead of the game", stated Chafic Traboulsi, Head of Networks at Ericsson Middle East & Africa.

The SAMENA Council's Leaders' Summit is an annual leadership event, encompassing private and government sector leaders' gathering, various bi-lateral "closed-door" meetings, and panel discussions, held among stakeholders in a world-class setting. Leaders' Summit 2019 will build on past discussions, centered around enabling a true, regional digital economy. Areas to come under discussion include Enabling Transition to "Inclusive 5G", Barriers to Achieving Economies of Scale in 5G Device Capabilities, Identification of Technology, Regulatory, and Business Challenges in Fifth-Generation Digital Communications, and "Industry 4.0" Use Cases in a 5G-enabled Digital Economy. **■**

Saudi Telecom Company makes MENA's first 5G call

Saudi Telecom Company has successfully made a call using a 5G smartphone — a first in the MENA region and among the first globally — in cooperation with its strategic partners.

"The successful call on a new 5G handset paves the way for our customers to enjoy many new services and capabilities provided by the new 5G network. STC will continue to provide innovation and quality to its valued customers once 5G devices become available in the global markets," the telecom giant said.

STC Group CEO Nasser Al-Nasser said the company is committed to providing the latest innovative technologies, "in line with its key role as the digital enabler to achieve the objectives of the Kingdom's Vision 2030." This, he said, should reflect positively on the quality of services and solutions provided by STC in the health, education, mining and energy sectors.

In May 2018, STC launched its first 5G live network, a first in the MENA region. STC has also been at the forefront of 5G testing activities since 2017. **■**



STC announces the first global Multi-Vendor Integration in its 5G Network

STC has completed the first global Multi-Vendor-Integration-Verification (MVIV) for its Huawei and Cisco core infrastructure with Ericsson and Nokia supplied 5G Radio Networks. STC continues to boost its 5G network capabilities and strives to provide the best "Ultra High Speed & Low Latency" experience for its customers through the newly emerging 5G network.

Following the 5G launch in 2018, STC and its global partners have continued to cooperate to enhance the 5G ecosystem in the Kingdom. These joint interoperability

successes will ensure seamless interworking between all elements of STC infrastructure and will deliver the best possible results.

This critical achievement will speed up the introduction of the latest 5G technologies and nurture the growth of 5G services to fulfill ever-growing market expectations.

As a result, this development will act as a solid step towards meeting total national digitization transformation. This milestone will enable flexibility and agility in our field deployment and ensures a smoother launch

of services. This is also viewed as a direct contribution in compliance with the latest 3GPP Release.

Eng. Khaled I. Al Dharrab, Infrastructure Sector VP, STC, said: "5G network is developing at a very high rate. STC is a leading worldwide operator with a commitment to pioneer the technological advancements and introduce new 5G services and use-cases. We have already put ourselves on the road to enable technology and shape the future of 5G services in the Kingdom". **■**

Etisalat AGM approves Full-year 2018 dividends of 80 fils per share



At Etisalat's Annual General Meeting (AGM), held at the company's headquarters in Abu Dhabi, shareholders have backed the board's recommendation to pay full-year 2018 dividends of 80 fils per share and approved the proposal of lifting restrictions on foreign shareholders voting rights.

Etisalat Group consolidated revenues reached AED 52.4 billion while consolidated net profit after Federal Royalty reached AED 8.6 billion an increase of 2.4% compared to the same period last year.

At the AGM, Eissa Mohamed Al-Suwaidi, Chairman, Etisalat Group said: "Our journey in 2018, marks another successful year for Etisalat in realizing its vision towards driving the digital future to empower societies. As a group, we focused on strengthening our core business, expanding and enriching our digital portfolio, and diversifying into new growth opportunities. We have increased the effort on transforming Etisalat into an agile and more efficient company.

"With the emergence of the digital era,



there have been dynamic changes and rapid developments in the global telecom sector. Etisalat maintained its leadership position as it continued to transition to a digital organization both internally and externally.

Our operating companies worked in line with the overall strategy and managed to enhance synergy at group level, progressed with our digital vision and elevated competitiveness in their respective markets.

He highlighted: "Etisalat Group continued to achieve strong financial performance and maintained its high credit rating reflecting its efforts to provide value to shareholders, which was the drive behind proposing a final dividend of AED 0.4 per share, bringing the total dividends for the year to AED 0.80, in line with our policy in previous years. This represents a dividend yield of 4.7% and dividends payout ratio of around 81%. In addition, the company enhanced its corporate governance by recommending lifting of restrictions on voting rights of foreign shareholders.

"Etisalat's infrastructure is built to enable digital transformation, to nurture innovation, and to provide superb customer experience, it is a competitive edge that will remain a strategic priority at group level. Our mobile and fixed networks in majority of operating markets are amongst the best within their local markets or surpassed their geographical boundaries and led at global scale. For UAE as an example, Etisalat have the widest LTE coverage globally and among the global leaders when it comes to

fiber network penetration.

"We are honored to be the trusted partner of governments in many national and strategic projects, and we are proud that our network investments and initiatives are supporting the countrywide telecom infrastructure indexes in markets that we operate in. For UAE, we have partnered with concerned governmental entities to fulfill our leadership ICT vision through dedicated initiatives that enhance penetration and coverage of key services. Ultimately, the integration of efforts has ranked UAE as number 2 in Telecom Infrastructure Index (TII) in 2018 as opposed to 25 in 2016.

He emphasized: "As Etisalat continues its journey, it allows new opportunities with every generation of technology that it adopts. Etisalat envisions 5G as a stepping-stone to unlimited potential, a technology that will enable new use cases, widen possibilities, and enhance value creation. Hence, we were the first to launch the first commercial 5G network in UAE and the region achieving another technological milestone for the company. The fifth generation of the network will fuel digital transformation, IoT, smart cities and the fourth industrial revolution.

"Etisalat was ranked as the most valuable brand portfolio in MENA for the 3rd consecutive year, a testimonial of its power and a translation of its sincere efforts to provide customers with great service, compelling offers, and value for money. Etisalat Group was the first Middle East company to break the \$10 billion barrier in terms of wider portfolio value.

He added: "Our geographic footprint today continues to present substantial opportunities and at the same time, some challenges. Etisalat has always seen beyond the obstacles and acted diligently to protect the long-term interests of its shareholders by optimizing and maintaining a healthy business portfolio and continue to seek good opportunities to grow as a company.

"Today, we look at the future with confidence and optimism as we are determined to progress on solid grounds and continue innovation while focusing on driving the digital transformation to take advantage of future opportunities that will enable us to add greater value to our customers and shareholders.



Eng. Saleh Abdullah Al Abdooli, Group CEO, Etisalat Group said: "Etisalat Group made further progress this year in its efforts to lead in the digital space, to transform its operating model, and to enhance value and returns to customers and shareholders. 2018 was rich with accomplishments that will enhance the ability to achieve our vision as a Group, which is to drive the digital future to empower societies.

"Portfolio optimization was a main thrust in 2018, we managed to sustain positive momentum across key international operations while retaining operations that assure synergy and value creation to the group as a whole. Our portfolio is the most valuable brand in MENA and the first and only brand to surpass the USD 10 bn, a great feat that puts Etisalat head to head with global renowned brands and ahead of many key regional brands.

He underlined: "Currently, Etisalat's portfolio spans over 15 countries while serving over 141 million customers. The technology that we provide and enable, brings individuals and societies closer at

a local and global level, such firm belief was the drive behind launching our new brand direction "Together Matter" which embodies the power of technology in connecting and enriching people's lives.

"In 2018 we have delivered a solid financial performance with consolidated revenues at AED 52.4 billion and consolidated net profit at AED 8.6 billion, representing 2.4% YoY growth. An outstanding outcome considering the stagnant global economy and some operating companies' specific challenges pertaining to currency devaluation, geopolitical instability, and elevated competitive and regulatory pressures.

"Etisalat is keen on staying ahead when it comes to next-generation technologies, our investment in the future has enabled us to achieve the first 5G commercial launch in MENA with EXPO 2020 as the first business customer. This achievement will redefine connectivity and support the full-fledged adoption of the Internet of things. As an industry leader, we have a role in driving change and expanding the

telecommunication ecosystem, we are building a platform for the future, which will materialize the next generation of immersive experiences and power the digital economy.

"2018 has also witnessed the launch of e-SIM features for Apple watches, in which Etisalat UAE was the first MENA Telecom operator to offer such service. While on a parallel track, we have affirmed our position as the preferred IoT provider with key projects like "Hassantuk", which is a landmark partnership with UAE's Ministry of Interior to deliver the first Smart Fire Alarm solution in the region.


He highlighted: "The launch of "Future Now" was another key milestone in 2018. The program encompasses under one consolidated umbrella the innovation center, the co-creation lab, the scale-ups program, and the IoT partnerships

program, all of which introduce new ways of innovating and collaborating, while aiming in essence to spur innovation in the surrounding ecosystem, hence forming a fertile setting for digital transformation. Innovation will always be a key strategic imperative for Etisalat and one of the key attributes that is associated to its brand in all markets.

"Building on our technological advanced position, delivering a superior and differentiated customer experiences is paramount. We will continue expanding mobile coverage across the footprint and investing in fixed network, cloud, and data centers. Our infrastructure is a hub for massive amounts of voice and data traffic, and is resilient enough to accommodate the upcoming surge in requirements, an adaptive and reliable network that serves customers of all types, while empowering customers through smart digital interfaces

and self-care channels.

He added: "Building on our success in 2018, we will continue our digital transformation journey across the group while pursuing multiple other critical-mission objectives. Growth remains a dominant priority that is driven by a rising digital and various new revenue streams. Driving efficiency through internal digitization and by optimizing portfolio-wide pockets of potential synergy and value creation is also a priority. Etisalat Group will always be the trusted partner for governments and enterprises, the preferred telecom provider for consumers, and the transformation engine for societies where it operates."

"I am thankful to our loyal customers and shareholders who inspire us to innovate and push boundaries, and to our employees who are the cornerstone of our success and the foundation of our future." 



Leaders' Summit 2019

18th April, 2019
Dubai, UAE

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5G making 4th industrial revolution a reality

Interview with Bocar A. BA, CEO and Board Member of SAMENA Council

Teletimes: Please tell us about SAMENA Council's latest activities and how participation of various industry players in your mission has increased, lately, since your transformation from being a stakeholder networking platform to being a trusted sector development partner.

Bocar A. BA: As a sector-development partner to regional Regulators, while being an advocacy voice for Telecom Operators, SAMENA Council's activities are always aimed at representing Telecom Operators' needs and sustainability requirements, while delivering on the trust and expectations from both private and public-sector stakeholders. These stakeholders include SAMENA Council's own member companies as well as government bodies and international ICT development organizations.

Among our key recent activities, preparatory work for the development of 5G has been on the main front: SAMENA Council has been instrumental in facilitating constructive communication and collaboration in some fundamental issues with respect to the timely proliferation of 5G in the region. Since before its flagship Leaders' Summit last year, the Council had been evaluating some high-level cost modelling for 5G development. The results of this work have shown that total deployment costs of 5G may be extremely risky, but could be reduced with forward-thinking spectrum auctioning or allocation approaches. SAMENA Council has also been emphasizing on spectrum harmonization and has assured regulatory authorities in the region that, with Operators, it will fully support national ICT visions

In terms of participation of renowned global private-sector players and engagement with regulatory authorities, SAMENA Council's industry-development efforts have indeed received attention from both private and public domains. The world's largest integrated telecommunications company, AT&T, recently joined SAMENA Council to advance digital development efforts of Operators; British Telecom had joined earlier to focus on regional digital development work with SAMENA Council. Other players, including those specializing in IoT, Blockchain, and satellite services, are now also a part of SAMENA Council's membership. On the regulatory fronts, SAMENA Council has been collaborating extensively with the UAE's Telecom Regulatory Authority and Saudi Arabia's Communications & Information Technology Commission on Internet's developmental considerations, digital economy, and future policy discussion platforms; and with Bahrain's TRA, an MoU to establish a joint group to define and address common

issues of interest has been put into effect.

TT: How does SAMENA Council view 5G and what are the key areas that require attention to make best use of 5G?

BA: 5G is a major evolutionary step in our mobile network technologies. It reflects on the human civilization's efforts to innovate, with a promise to greatly increase end-to-end network and terminal performance, and to provide an unprecedented digital experience to end-users; both machines and man. 5G also promises revolutionary means to create and make use of artificial intelligence, thereby allowing for the creation of advanced digital services that will cater to almost all areas of our lives. But it is also important to say that 5G is not about just technology; it is about ubiquitous connectivity and access to services at both low and high data-rates. New services based on AI, Blockchain, IoT, IIoT, Edge Computing, to name a few digital techniques and approaches, will all be made possible with the flexible and intelligent platforms provided by 5G.

Regarding the impediments for 5G, fortunately, much progress has already been made to make 5G possible. SAMENA Council anticipates seeing the proliferation of 5G realized in the region very soon. However, the two all-encompassing major areas, which I consider to be highly urgent and thus require special attention, are: *Operators' need* for improved spectrum allocation policies, and *general regulator-level support* for understanding future requirements of and multiple dimensions in building the region's digital economy through the proliferation of 5G.

TT: Are there any special efforts by SAMENA Council that have brought benefit to the Industry over the recent years?

BA: Teletimes has raised a very important question.

SAMENA Council's core benefit lies in its value-proposition: As an international non-profit organization (INPO), registered in Brussels - Belgium, with main Operations branch in Dubai - UAE, SAMENA Council has created a unique regional position as an Operator advocacy organization that promotes and enables institution-level engagements with leading private and public-sector entities. To a considerable extent, our efforts to bring direct benefit to SAMENA Council's most concerned stakeholders have been centered with pinpoint accuracy on filling external gaps between ITU and Operators, Operators and Regulators, Operators and Alternative Market Players, and on fostering consistency and consensus among member Operators.

As a result of these efforts, which some of the industry decision-makers see in the form of SAMENA Council's industry gatherings and closed-door stakeholder meetings, some of SAMENA Council's cost-saving advocacy efforts for Operators have lately been in the area of spectrum planning and 5G spectrum auctions. SAMENA Council has successfully highlighted the issue of extended payback periods in 5G investments and drawn attention of regional regulators, especially in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Kingdom of Bahrain, to spectrum allocation methodologies that may best serve the region. The Council values in having been privileged to have received official acknowledgement of these efforts, and to have contributed to spectrum allocation strategies that will save Operators large Capex and Opex while enabling the mitigation of spectrum interference

issues across countries. On the latter front, SAMENA Council has further work planned to be done with Regulators.

TT: Teletimes is seeing multiple viewpoints on what the upcoming World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-19) may or may not achieve for Telecom Operators. What is SAMENA Council's understanding of this subject, and what is your primary goal for WRC-19?

BA: The telecommunications industry runs on spectrum, and it is the WRC where Radio Regulations, which govern the rules of use of spectrum all around the world, are reviewed and revised as necessary. The process is highly complex and administratively highly involved. The agenda of WRC-19 contains over 30 agenda items and issues covering many frequency bands and radio services and includes "standing" agenda items which address general regulatory and procedural matters.

Because the decisions arrived at during WRC-19 will set the framework for how spectrum is used throughout the world for the next few years and beyond, SAMENA Council, as an ITU-D Sector Member, is exercising the mandate given to it by Operators to unify their voice and to precisely represent their needs and preferences.

“SAMENA Leaders' Summit 2019 will help visualize the impact of 5G in boosting ICT business and innovation in the region”

Fundamentally, the agenda of the WRC-19 is least representative of the current actual spectrum needs and requirements of the Operators. Thus SAMENA Council is aiming to channelize its focus away from various spectrum band proposals, including those for above 20 GHz spectrum which is not needed for many more years, and to concentrate all efforts *instead* to enable the harmonization of band 78 (or C band, 3.6 to 3.8 GHz, particularly). This, SAMENA Council, believes is all that is of most relevance to Operators and will be an important milestone in making 5G possible with more scale, considering that signal interference in this band across borders and across the Satellite and Operator community will be a major issue to tackle and will impact economies of scale in 5G proliferation. SAMENA Council believes that the harmonization of C band, particularly of its upper portion (3.6 to 3.8 GHz) requires Operator - Regulator cooperation, and is a sensitive area in which it can effectively play a contributing role.

TT: How can industry stakeholders and decision-makers prepare for the 5G future?

BA: All industry decision-makers need first to keep in view the speed at which mobility and connectedness are materializing, and how they are impacting data consumption and defining new business horizons in telecom-media convergence. Data volumes, supported

by new wireless systems that include advanced terrestrial as well as space-based broadband access systems, will maintain an upward trajectory as far as we know and can imagine.

Secondly, the decision-makers need to work much more closely with each other. Gone are the times when each business could thrive in by operating in a silo mode. Now, in the age of digital customer experience management, collaboration is inevitable for meeting success. Moreover, as we have technologically evolved, so has been our evolution in terms of possibilities we can create. This is a century of cities - of smart cities, that is. In itself, this is a tremendous motivation and inspiration to have, and it shows how preparing for the future will require future planning that is driven by a full understanding of the new digital life cycle in the digital ecosystem.

TT: How is SAMENA Council calling for action on digital transformation within the region and on paving the path for 5G?

BA: SAMENA Council has always called for openness and collaboration among stakeholders. In many incidences, SAMENA Council's intervention and efforts to fill communication gaps have been instrumental in bringing stakeholders together on unified platforms.

In the case of 5G, SAMENA Council started its work three years ago, when our focus on spectrum, digital transformation, and digitization enablement grew gradually, governed by the priorities defined by SAMENA Council's Board of Directors. By now, it has become a full-fledged digital transformation and Operator enablement program.

The constituents of this program are the thought leadership on the spectrum needs of operators, direct collaboration frameworks with regulators on addressing the Industry's most pressing issues, contributing new information and academic analyses on industry issues in regulatory workshops, and bringing Regulators and Operators together to conduct thematic intellectual discourse.

Bringing the regional leadership together under one platform is an imperative that SAMENA Council has exercised for well near a decade, and, in the shape of Leaders' Summit in particular, it has proven to be a successful initiative by the Council.

TT: Please tell us about Leaders' Summit 2019 and what is most significant about the Summit this year.

BA: SAMENA Council's Leaders' Summit 2019 has the official patronage of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of the UAE, with anticipated participation of various heads of regulatory authorities as well as ministers who will attend the Summit this year. We are expecting more representation from South Asia's developing markets, and foresee have meaningful discussions on the Industry's new roles and expectations in the age of 4th Industrial Revolution. The anticipated indulging conversations of Leaders' Summit 2019 will help visualize the impact of 5G in boosting ICT business and innovation in the region.

Hosted for the sixth consecutive year by Huawei Technologies Middle East, co-Sponsored by Sudatel Group and Ericsson Middle East, and with the presence of SAMENA Council's Operator members and other leading businesses in the industry, the one-



day leaders-only congregation, will continue its tradition of bringing change-makers from the private and public domains together, but, this year, in a new organization format, designed to maximize attendance and enrich discussion and open exchange among industry stakeholders. We look forward to covering a wide spectrum of topics, including enabling transition to "Inclusive 5G"; barriers to achieving economies of scale in 5G device capabilities; identification of technology, regulatory, and business challenges in 5G communications; Industry 4.0; and technology use cases in a 5G-enabled digital economy.

Leaders' Summit 2019, building on information and knowledge base created with industry decision-makers over the past several months, combined with the knowledge exchange that will transpire during the Summit, is expected to directly impact the speed of proliferation of 5G in the region and SAMENA Council hopes that the year 2019 will prove to be truly transformational in our aspirations for creating a fifth-generation technology-powered world. **T**

Leaders' Summit 2019 Topics

Enabling transition to "Inclusive 5G"; barriers to achieving economies of scale in 5G device capabilities; identification of technology, regulatory, and business challenges in 5G communications; Industry 4.0; and technology use cases in a 5G-enabled digital economy.



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2018 was very exciting for Bahrain

Ahmed Al Hujairy
CEO of GFB Group and Director Batelco gives an overview of the Bahraini ICT Landscape and talks about future prospects in an exclusive interview with Teletimes

Interview: Khalid Athar

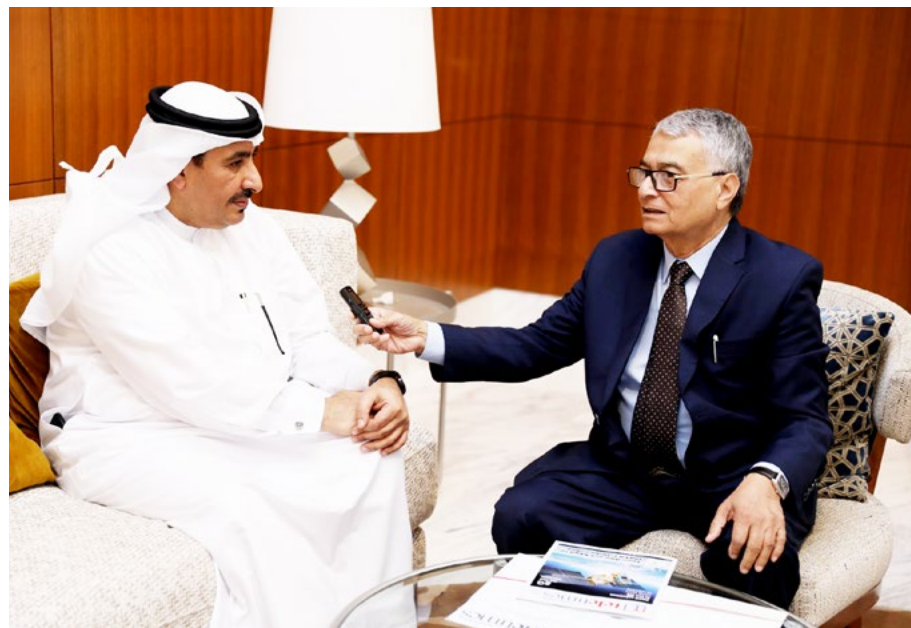


Khalid Athar: Please share with us an overview of the year 2018 for the ICT sector in Bahrain?

Ahmed Al Hujairy: 2018 was very exciting for the ICT sector in Bahrain. The largest project is related to infrastructure with respect to the new airport building and we are happy to be working on that. We have deployed solutions with the latest technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Smart Devices such as Smart Screens in the airport. I would like to congratulate the Minister of Communication and Transportation because I think this project holds great significance from an ICT perspective apart from the infrastructure importance.

Apart from that, another highlight for the year was Batelco's announcement of the biggest data centre which will be a neutral data centre. I think we will be able to better see the results of the project in 2018.

Furthermore, Bahrain has introduced a



lot of new technology and smart solutions as part of the e-government and these solutions have truly contributed towards

improving the efficiency and accessibility of many services for residents, visitors and businesses.

KA: Which industries do you see as the major areas of high investment at this point in time?

AH: I think right now, fintech and blockchain have the highest buzz with lots of investment and interest from people across various domains. Blockchain and fintech solutions will change the banking sector as we know it and we will see different banking systems in the coming few years. I am happy to see many banks and regulators realize that banking cannot be traditional any more. The biggest changes in this industry are already visible with smart and e-payment solutions. There is a lot of interest around AI but I am not seeing it happening right now however, the AI domain will also flourish at a great pace in the future. In Bahrain the telecom sector has been a little bit stagnant in terms of how it is delivering mobile services, broadband services and I think the traditional way of

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On its 10th anniversary next year, we would like to see BITEC and Meet ICT into a digitally transformed event with an even higher international participation”

operating does not generate that much revenue anymore so most of the telcos (the smart one at least) will move more into digital services and provide services beyond their traditional offerings. In fact, this is quite obvious from their announcements, their recruitments and the way they are changing their organizational structures.

KA: When do you think will Bahrain adopt 5G – what is the current scenario in this aspect?

Ahmed: The operators in Bahrain are in the process of testing the 5G at this point in time. Everybody is at a different level of testing but all three understand the importance of moving to 5G and they are collaborating with an industry leader such



as Huawei to transform their network. The TRA Bahrain has also provided a temporary license to these operators so I think Bahrain is very much ready and next year we will see the gradual introduction of 5G. Currently, the challenges to 5G are the regulation and the size of the investment for operators to make this happen. However, things are still moving forward in the right direction.

KA: What is the current situation for Bahrain with regards to Satellites?

AH: Bahrain had decided a long time back not to enter this sector - it is part of a consortium like Arabsat. However, we do have a space program that is being launched and is at a matured stage. Bahrain is not looking at it from the telecom perspective but looking at it purely as a space initiative.

I think at this point of time, even though satellite can be economical in many scenarios, it's still not as popular over here. Terrestrial cables are preferred for high speed and latency as compared to satellites. I see more investment going into fibre cables, more regional connections, international connection because this is what companies like AWS, Google or Microsoft need. The fast data centers really cannot survive without terrestrial networks.

KA: You have played a key role in organizing the MEET ICT & BITEC - Would you like to share the concept behind this event and how you feel about this year's

program?

AH: MEET ICT & Bitex was an idea actually born in Bahrain between members of the IT industry. We did not have any single ICT

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Everybody is at a different level of testing but all three understand the importance of moving to 5G and they are collaborating with an industry leader such as Huawei to transform their network”

event here in Bahrain where companies came together and met each other. This (2019) was the ninth year and we are very happy that it is growing year on year. The main concept and objective is to basically have a meeting point for the entire industry.

Generally, the event is growing fast. We have more delegates joining us, more quality speakers focusing on hot topics like AI, digital transformation and at the same time we are seeing international pavilions coming to Bahrain. They think of Bahrain as a door to the region. We have our Arab ICT Union that was established in Bahrain and have 8 member countries and plan to make all Arab countries part of this union. On its 10th anniversary next year we would like to see it into a transformed event with an even higher international participation.

KA: Keeping in view this year's event, do you have any idea to further improve and expand the event?

AH: In 2020, we have a plan to make it available online, we want people to connect with us online. This is the best way of making the event available to companies having difficulty to participate on-site. We would be digitally transforming the event. At the same time, we will bring more international delegates along with our local delegates. **T**

Huawei Day UAE 2019 held to support UAE's AI strategy and digital transformation

Huawei held Huawei Day UAE 2019 to showcase its latest AI-enabled ICT portfolio, and offer a platform for industry leaders to meet and develop the region's AI ecosystem. The showrooms, sessions and discussions held at Huawei Day UAE 2019 will help participants accelerate the deployment of smart technologies that support the UAE's national AI strategy and digital transformation agenda.

The one-day gathering saw the participation of high-level government and industry leaders, analysts and media at keynotes and presentations by Huawei, customers and partners, as well as panel sessions and workshops on exploring the way forward in implementing AI across vertical sectors. All guests had access to showrooms of AI-enabled ICT products and solutions.



Huawei Day UAE 2019 was also the occasion for Huawei to unveil two new AI-led technologies that are set to enable digital transformation across industries in UAE.

The first was Huawei's CloudEngine 16800, the world's first data center switch built for the AI era. Equipped with a high-performance AI chip, the product is designed to help enterprises accelerate their intelligent transformation by improving AI training efficiency by 40 percent, boosting distributed storage speed by 30 percent, and reducing CAPEX by 90 percent.

The second was the OceanStor Dorado 3000 V3 – the world's fastest all-flash storage system. Purpose built for an enterprise's mission-critical workloads, OceanStor Dorado 3000 V3 delivers lightning-fast analysis of massive volumes of data through three types of intelligent chips, reducing fault recovery time from two hours to ten minutes while also lowering overall OPEX by 65 percent. High-performing and reliable, the storage system achieves 99.9999 percent availability to satisfy the strictest reliability requirements.

The arrival of the two technologies are Huawei's latest contribution to the UAE's digital transformation journey.

The company sees AI and digitization as strategic pillars in the success of UAE AI Strategy 2031, and is actively strengthening its channel partner program to broaden the reach of emerging technologies across industries.

Further promoting the breadth of its offering to the nation's enterprises, Huawei also provided attendees with a close look at its Atlas Intelligent Computing Solutions – an AI enablement platform to fuel the UAE's AI future with supreme computing power.

Another notable showcase was of Huawei's Software-Defined Camera, which can be constantly reprogrammed and applied in a variety of security scenarios such as face checkpoint, situation awareness, vehicle checkpoint, and Intelligent Transportation Surveillance (ITS).

"We are committed to bringing the most advanced 5G and AI technologies to contribute actively to UAE's Digital Transformation plans towards UAE 2031 AI Strategy." Commented Charles Yang, President of Huawei Middle East.

"We are at the beginning of the new journey into the AI era. We will work closely with our partners to support customers to enter the

new intelligent age through our technology innovation capability and global experience" commented Li Shi, CEO of Huawei UAE.

"AI, 5G, Big Data, IoT – these technologies and others are helping to lead the transformation of industries and economies, and as a result, they've also become a source of competitive advantage among organizations," commented Jo Sho, Chief Technology Officer, Huawei Enterprise Business Group Vertical Solutions Department. "Huawei is proud of the role we play in enabling the UAE's enterprises to capitalize on today's most advanced applications of intelligent technology, and their success reflects the fact that as a solutions provider, we are firmly on the right track," added Sho.

Alaa Elshimy, Managing Director and Vice President for Huawei Enterprise Business Group in Middle East region, added: "We are at the threshold of a fully connected, intelligent world where innovation takes place in the blink of an eye and has a profound impact on people, families, and organizations. All organizations and businesses need to embrace and activate intelligence through an open, flexible, secure digital platform with state-of-the-art artificial intelligence capabilities." **T**

Huawei releases its 2018 Annual Report: Bullish growth in the face of adversity

Huawei has released its 2018 Annual Report. According to the report, the company maintained strong business growth in 2018. Its sales revenue rounded off at USD 106 billion, up 19.5% year-on-year; its net profit reached USD 8.7 billion, up 25.1% year-on-year.

In 2018, Huawei invested USD 14.9 billion (14.1% of its sales revenue) in R&D, ranking fifth globally in The 2018 EU Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard. Over the last ten years, Huawei's R&D expenditure has reached more than USD 70.5 billion. According to official data released by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Huawei filed 5,405 patent applications to this organization in 2018, ranking first among all companies globally.

At the release of its annual report, Guo Ping, Huawei's Rotating Chairman, said, "Information communications technology is rapidly working its way into every industry. This has triggered a digital, intelligent transformation – the driving force behind our digital economy. Through heavy, consistent investment in 5G innovation, alongside large-scale commercial deployment, Huawei is committed to building the world's best network connections. Throughout this process, Huawei will continue to strictly comply with all relevant standards to build secure, trustworthy, and high-quality products. As we work towards this goal, we have been explicitly clear: Cyber security and user privacy protection are at the absolute top of our agenda. We are confident that the companies that choose to work with Huawei will be the most competitive in the 5G era. And countries that choose to work with Huawei will gain an advantage for the next wave of growth in the digital economy."

Guo emphasized, "The easiest way to bring down a fortress is to attack it from within. And the easiest way to reinforce it is from outside. Moving forward, we will do everything we can to shake off outside distractions, improve management, and make progress towards our strategic goals.



Guo Ping

We will continue to strengthen operational compliance, ensure business continuity and sustainability, and cultivate an open ecosystem where all players collaborate and prosper together. In addition, we will continue our organizational transformation to inspire greater passion and vitality across the organization."

In its carrier business, Huawei launched its latest 5G and SoftCOM AI solutions, focusing on making them as simple as possible to use and maintain. 2018 also saw ongoing innovation in domains like premium home broadband and the Internet of Things (IoT), helping carriers seize new growth opportunities. In 2018, the sales revenue of Huawei's carrier business reached USD 43.2 billion, roughly the same as the year prior.

In its enterprise business, Huawei continued providing cloud, big data, artificial intelligence (AI), and IoT solutions, as well as a range of products for data centers, all-flash storage, and WiFi. By integrating these technologies into its digital platform, Huawei has facilitated the construction

of smart cities, safe cities, and smart campuses, and has helped drive the digital transformation of its customers in the finance, transportation, and energy sectors. In 2018, the sales revenue of Huawei's enterprise business reached USD 10.9 billion, up 23.8% year-on-year.

In its cloud business, Huawei launched 160 cloud services and 140 solutions, and worked with its partners to serve customers worldwide with 40 availability zones across 23 regions. Huawei has grown its list of partners to more than 6,000 in this domain, and is actively exploring the use of its AI services in more than 200 projects across 10 major industries.

In its consumer business, Huawei further increased its share of the global smartphone market and has further enhanced the positioning of its high-end devices. It has also made major breakthroughs in building an intelligent ecosystem for all user scenarios. In 2018, the sales revenue of Huawei's consumer business reached USD 51.3 billion, up 45.1% year-on-year. **T**

Etisalat's highlights impact of 5G technologies on the future of media

'Media 2.0'-the increasing impact of future technology on the media sector was the focus of Khalifa Al Shamsi, Chief Strategy and Governance Officer, Etisalat Group at the two-day Arab Media Forum, the largest annual gathering of its kind in the Arab region.

Etisalat was the official telecom partner at the event and in its 18th year of participation. Al Shamsi highlighted in his session that media plays an increasingly significant role in our lives as a trusted source for news and information, and beyond that also a source for entertainment. It is also a powerful communications platform for the society with the ability to influence people's opinions and perceptions therefore making a significant social impact at all levels.

The Media industry has undergone a drastic transformation in recent years, and mainly due to the major technological advancements the world has witnessed.

He went on to highlight the advances in technology and how it has facilitated the growth of the media sector. The investments in 5G networks will play a significant role in making a positive impact on the media. 5G has 'unlimited capabilities' with high speeds and ultra-low latency. Live feed news coverage for reporters in the field specifically for breaking news and multi-location interviews for the TV industry were cited as examples for the future of media on the 5G network.

The high speeds for data download/upload speeds will benefit all journalists in particularly investigative reporters. These advanced capabilities will also be of immense benefits in media coverage of major cultural events, especially large-scale ones such as the upcoming Dubai Expo 2020.

This will enhance the broadcasting capabilities for external coverage vehicles, create futuristic media platforms, and augment the services of content providers. High speeds and low latencies would also



boost the quality of the media's interaction with its audiences.

5G technology will make hologram reporters a reality, still currently in experimentation stages; people in the future would go beyond than virtual reality being able to experience the news event through advanced immersive experiences technology.

Currently globally there are 5 billion smartphone users with the number projected to surpass 7.2 billion within the coming 5 years or less. 5G data usage will comprise 25 percent of the total global data transfer share.

Video and immersive experiences will form the core of future 5G network capabilities giving users near life-like experiences with maximised levels of 2-way interactions.

5G networks will have a significant and positive outcome for the media and entertainment industry. There will be a transformation for fixed networks whereby globally all markets would move to a single

telecom network that delivers 24/7 links to the rest of the world.

This would elevate financial revenue, create new sources of income from advertising and content and have a wider outreach. In such a scenario, all segments of the society should be familiar with advanced technologies which it makes important to have new regulations and legislations to be put in place to safeguard people's privacy as well as tackle cybersecurity and intellectual property.

He concluded his talk by pointing out that it's imperative that we have media entities ready and willing to adopt these new technologies in order to ensure its leading regional and global status. At Arab Media Forum this year, there was a focus on the use of AI-driven 'Future Journalists', a first for the MENA region. Etisalat exclusively brought the first Arab 'Robot Journalist' in a session on the first day of the forum named 'Aga A 20-50'. These advances in the ICT sector will cause disruptive advances in the making, broadcasting and usage of all media at a regional and global scale. **T**

5G is the 'Future of Connectivity' and a game changer for the telecom industry, says Etisalat CTO

Etisalat to invest AED 4 billion during 2019 in digital transformation, the mobile and fiber network Targeting to build 1000 5G towers in the UAE

Etisalat's pioneering efforts in 5G will pave the way for the 'Future of Connectivity' with innovation and digital transformation taking centre stage and leading the company to play a greater role in the digital lives of consumers and enterprises, said Hatem Bamatraf, Chief Technology Officer, Etisalat International at 5G MENA 2019.

Bamatraf was the keynote speaker at '5G MENA 2019' in Dubai that held high-level keynotes, 5G use-cases, onstage debates and interviews, executive CxO summits, a series of networking opportunities, an awards ceremony, a day-long Blockchain and IoT focused stream.

As part of his keynote, he highlighted Etisalat's continuous investments and focus on enhancing and building one of the most advanced networks in the region having empowered digital transformation and opening up opportunities to engage with our customers in new ways. Etisalat plans to invest AED4 billion during 2019 in digital transformation, mobile and fiber networks.

"We are stepping into an era, which marks the revolution of 'Intelligent Connectivity' underpinned by ubiquitous and hyper connectivity. This term is used to describe the powerful combination of flexible, high-speed 5G networks, the Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI). This will have a significant and profound change on individuals, industries, society and the economy, transforming how we live and work."

5G is a reality in UAE due to Etisalat's pioneering efforts, which will enable subscribers to enjoy technologies blending physical and digital realms from AR & VR to IoT, AI, autonomous vehicles, advanced robotics, 3D printing, wearable tech and more. This is mainly due to the backbone of a robust and one of the most advanced, fastest and widest network in the region.



"Innovation was always at the core of our strategy to 'Drive the digital future to empower societies' putting our efforts on providing innovative solutions enabling connectivity, mobility, connected devices, energy efficiency, lower latencies and more reliability."

Bamatraf reflected the successful journey of Etisalat setting a benchmark for the telecom industry. The major milestone for Etisalat and the telecom industry was the launch of the first commercial 5G wireless network in May 2018 in the UAE becoming the first telecom operator in the Middle East

and North Africa (MENA) region to achieve this technological breakthrough and set an industry benchmark.

Etisalat was the first operator to have a fully developed commercial 5G network available to provide gigabit internet services to its customers. The network will fuel enterprises digital transformation, IoT, smart cities and the fourth industrial revolution.

He added that Etisalat's network will also provide the most advanced digital and telecom services to Expo 2020 Dubai and its millions of visitors, supporting an expected

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UAE ranked as global leader in Fiber Optic Network for a third year in a row

UAE is ranked number one for the highest Fiber to the Home (FTTH) penetration among all its global counterparts for a third year in a row, according to the leading industry body FTTH Council. The council published its annual report that showcases the countries with the highest fiber optic network penetration globally. The report highlighted UAE as the number one country globally with its fiber network coverage surpassing Singapore, China, South Korea, Hongkong and Japan.

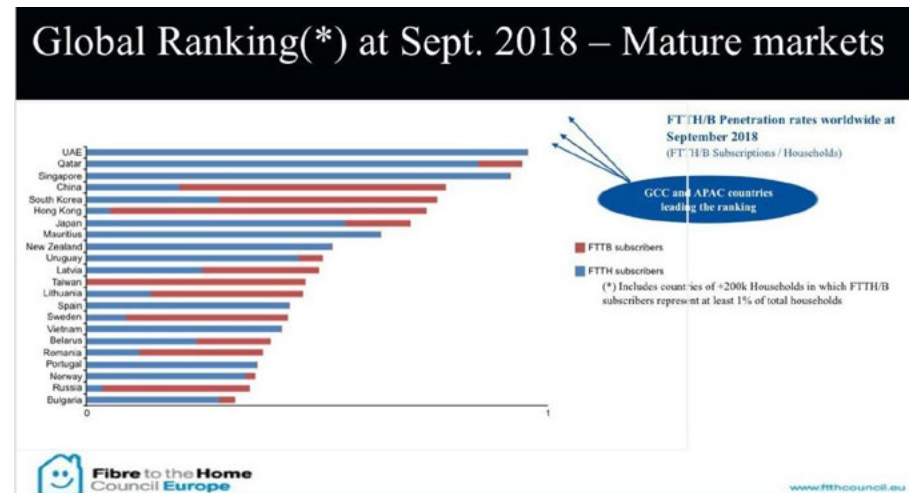
Etisalat's network is a backbone to its long-term strategy to enable and drive digital transformation across its network. Today's announcement signifies that it has maintained consistent leadership globally in FTTH penetration setting a benchmark in the global telecom industry. This achievement was only possible due to the continuous support and vision of the leadership of the UAE in the development and modernisation of the infrastructure.

Etisalat plans to invest AED 4 billion during 2019 in digital transformation, the mobile and fiber network. This has led to the launch of innovative services meeting the growing demand and changing requirements of Etisalat's customers across the country. With Etisalat's strategy focused on 'Driving the Digital Future to Empower Societies' the

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300,000 users on peak days. It will be a key component of the Expo 2020 'smart site' that will deliver a unique and memorable experience for the millions of visitors.

In terms of 5G readiness, Etisalat is ready to launch the 5G service for all consumers with its infrastructure and network equipped to support all 5G devices set to be launched by global mobile device manufacturers in 2019. With continuous investments in technology and innovation on the network, Etisalat's infrastructure can enable 5G connectivity today for all fixed devices



network forms a significant component of this digital transformation journey. Etisalat has continuously focused on investing in innovation and on next-generation technologies and services to expand and enhance the network.

In today's connected world, with the greater need for computing and connectivity capabilities such as an advanced network also enables the implementation of futuristic technologies like augmented reality, robotics and artificial intelligence. Consumers are able to experience high performance and capabilities required in

expected to be launched this year.

Etisalat's technical teams are building 5G network sites to make this a reality and enable 5G coverage across the country. With 5G technology consumers will witness unprecedented maximum speeds of 10Gbps.

Bamatraf explained to the audience, he said: "Etisalat's network and infrastructure will be ready to provide the service as soon as the 5G mobile handsets are available in UAE. We are aiming to build 1000 5G towers across the UAE during 2019 to enable 5G coverage. With majority of 5G deployments to be implemented by 2020 on a global level, by

advanced gaming, streaming, applications and entertainment with a high-speed network.

For enterprises, digital transformation will play a pivotal role in enabling the support of advanced use cases, applications and technologies. This will be key to bring success and next level of development leading Etisalat to play a greater role in digital lives of consumers and enterprises. This forms the backbone of a robust and one of the most advanced and fastest network in the region. **T**

the end of 2024 industry estimates indicate a projection of 1.5 billion 5G subscriptions accounting to 17 percent of all mobile subscriptions at that time."

Etisalat foresees the future of connectivity and is already exploring use cases with new technologies and services that will blend our physical and digital world. Infrastructure investments have been key to this growth and leadership in the market, this continuous investment have led to the modernization of mobile and fiber-optic networks and infrastructure development through investments in future technologies such as IoT, AI and 5G. **T**

Etisalat's partnership with 'Abu Dhabi Smart Solutions' supports the emirate's digital transformation



Etisalat signed an MoU with the Abu Dhabi Smart Solutions and Services Authority (ADSSSA) to boost their collaboration in the digital transformation of government services in Abu Dhabi.

Etisalat will provide the technical knowledge and expertise to facilitate the ADSSSA's drive to digitise Abu Dhabi Government services, thus providing seamless and proactive customer experience to the Abu Dhabi community through the ADSSSA's platform 'TAMM'.

The MoU was signed by Saeed Mohamed Al Mansouri, Executive Director of Joint

Government Services, ADSSSA, Salvador Anglada, Group Chief Business Officer, Etisalat at Etisalat's headquarters in Abu Dhabi. The signing ceremony was also attended by H.E Dr. Rauda Al Saadi, Director General, ADSSSA, and Eng Saleh Abdulla Al Abdooli, Chief Executive Officer, Etisalat Group in addition to a number of senior executives from both entities.

The agreement strengthens the existing cooperation between ADSSSA and Etisalat, and paves the way for joint innovative initiatives and strategic solutions to provide an array of innovative digital solutions, boosting the level of Abu Dhabi

government's customer happiness and satisfaction.

Eng. Saleh Abdulla Al Abdooli, Group Chief Executive Officer of Etisalat, said: "We are honoured to bring our network capabilities, teams and expertise together to serve and cater to the requirements of the different segments of UAE. The cooperation with ADSSSA will help in enhancing digital platforms, smart services and applications enriching people's lives in line with the vision of the UAE leadership to be a pioneer in all sectors. The partnership will provide futuristic solutions and services enabling connectivity with an advanced network and digital capabilities, which is also in line with Etisalat's vision of 'Driving the Digital Future to empower societies'."

The MoU comes in the context of Etisalat's commitment to support the efforts of ADSSSA to harness the latest digital technologies to provide the next generation of government services. Etisalat provides a wide range of ICT solutions to the Abu Dhabi government services platform 'TAMM', which is a leading and futuristic model for government services in line with the Abu Dhabi Government Vision and the Abu Dhabi economic stimulus plan 'Ghadan 21', which means 'Tomorrow 21'. **T**



ST Engineering offer to acquire Newtec

Singapore Engineering has entered into a conditional share purchase agreement to acquire a 100% ownership in Newtec Group (the "Proposed Acquisition").

The consideration of €250m on a cash-free and debt-free basis for the Proposed Acquisition, subject to closing adjustments, is payable in cash.

Satcom is a fast-growing industry with an expected CAGR of 8% according to northern sky research over the next 10 years. The surge of Low Earth Orbit (LEO) constellations will increase bandwidth capacity and reduce operating cost, thereby creating new demand. New use cases, especially to support Smart City applications such as IoT and connected cars, will drive demand for satcom services.

ST Engineering has been growing its satcom business through its U.S.-based iDirect and Singapore-based satcom product and solution business. The Group's satcom business is an industry leader in the Aeronautical and Maritime segments and has led the industry's transition to high-throughput satellite (HTS) managed services. It is also the technology provider for leading global satellite operators such as Inmarsat, Intelsat and SES. In 2018, ST Engineering formed a JV company named Jet-Talk Limited, with SatixFy UK Limited to develop cost-effective, high-performance flat panel antenna to address the growing demand for in-flight connectivity. The Group offers a suite of satcom solutions to provide seamless global network and bandwidth management with end-to-end integration that addresses the growing needs of enterprise, government, mobility and defence market globally.

On the other hand, Newtec is a key technology provider in the satellite broadcast segment with unique ultra-high throughput capabilities and a strong presence in the European satcom market. It has a proven range of cost-effective consumer satellite terminals, and industry-leading bandwidth efficiency technology. Recently, Newtec was among the first companies to successfully test over-the-air communication via LEO satellites. LEO satellites are expected to take off with the



launch of more than 5,000 satellites in the coming years. The company is also well placed to leverage the advent of IP-based satellite broadcast which is critical for real-time content distribution.

The proposed acquisition of Newtec will add intellectual property, products and market access. ST Engineering will continue to invest in Newtec in Belgium to position it to be the Group's European centre for the satcom business. The complementary and synergistic effect of this proposed acquisition will enable ST Engineering to meet demand across the full spectrum of the satcom market.

With enhanced satcom capabilities, ST Engineering can better participate and lead the advancement of the satcom industry to enable Smart Cities globally. Capitalising on an enlarged IP and product portfolio, the Group will be able to:

Accelerate the deployment of satcom-enabled 5G telco network, bringing high bandwidth connectivity to remote regions. This will help bridge the digital divide and enable the development of new applications such as tele-medicine and tele-education. Address the growing needs for IoT and M2M connectivity, where millions of devices and telematic sensor points are expected to be connected for surveillance, data gathering and big data analytics.

"This proposed acquisition expands our satcom business in a meaningful way in an attractive industry that is high-tech and high-growth, driving connectivity advances

in a world where 5G and satcom converge," said Vincent Chong, President & CEO, ST Engineering. "It aligns with our strategy to invest in businesses that help accelerate our growth trajectory, especially in Smart City, to deliver long-term shareholder value." "We are pleased to be able to acquire Newtec, an established satcom player with strong technology foundations.

"This coming together of two companies will enable us to move forward together, using our deep-rooted passion for innovation to address our rapidly changing world of connectivity," said Roald Borré, Chairman of Newtec Board of Directors. "This is an exciting and hugely significant step that simply makes sense for our customers and our staff."

The Consideration was arrived at after negotiations between the parties taking into account, among other factors, Newtec's current financial performance and future growth prospects. The Consideration translates into a multiple of 14.6 times Newtec's EBITDA and 2.7 times revenue for the financial year ended 30 September 2018. The businesses when combined, is expected to produce about S\$200m in value creation arising from revenue and cost synergies.

The proposed acquisition is not expected to have any material impact on the earnings per share of ST Engineering for the current financial year but is expected to be earnings accretive from the second year post acquisition. The proposed acquisition is expected to reduce ST Engineering's audited consolidated net tangible assets by approximately S\$0.11 per share from S\$0.41 per share to S\$0.30 per share, assuming the Proposed Transaction has been effected at the end of FY2018. Newtec has consolidated net tangible assets (NTA) of €5.1m and consolidated net assets of €28.4m as at 30 September 2018.

Subject to regulatory approvals and conditions that include receipt of clearance from the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, Foreign Investment Review in France, and anti-trust approvals in Austria, the Proposed Acquisition is expected to complete in 2H2019. ■

MBRSC and Bahrain's National Space Science Agency sign MoU during the Global Space Congress in Abu Dhabi



To enhance the cooperation strategy with different government organisations in the region, the Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) has signed a cooperation, information and data-sharing agreement with Bahrain's National Space Science Agency (NSSA) for the application of satellite images and space research sciences.

The MoU was signed by HE Hamad Obaid AlMansoori, Chairman of MBRSC, and HE Eng. Kamal bin Ahmed Mohammed, Bahraini Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications, Supervision & Control of NSSA, in the presence of HE Yousuf Hamad AlShaibani, Director General MBRSC and Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim Al-Asiri, NSSA CEO, during the second Global Space Congress, launched today at the St. Regis Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi and ends at 21st, March 2019.

The agreement aims to expand the cooperation scope between the two entities through the exchange of practical experience and human resources in the satellite and scientific fields that include satellite, space sciences and remote sensing, their applications, satellite communications

and world navigation systems by usage of satellites. The MoU states that MBRSC shall supply NSSA with multi-spectral satellite images and high-quality and corrected panchromatic images with coordinates system approved by NSSA and which will be captured via satellites launched by MBRSC. NSSA shall also develop the current and future requirements associated with remote sensing and satellite images, provide the MBRSC with them for consideration, approval and provision according to priorities and available possibilities and provide the MBRSC with spatial and geographical data agreed to by both parties for processing satellite images and data.

HE AlMansoori stressed the importance of strategic partnerships with government organisations in the region; "This MoU supports MBRSC vision to contribute to the transfer of expertise and knowledge to the region and supporting other institutions and agencies in the space sector. Moreover, this cooperation with Bahrain's NSSA will contribute to building smart and distinctive cities based on the latest space science and remote sensing systems and applications. This comes with the context of the MBRSC

research and development efforts in satellite services. The agreement will also contribute to enhancing cooperation for both sides through the exchange of practical experience and human resources development in the space and scientific fields," said AlMansoori.

HE Eng. Kamal bin Ahmed Mohammed expressed his pleasure for signing the MoU and said: "This MoU is a framework for an existing cooperation between MBRSC and NSSA, and it will open new horizons of cooperation in the field of space and its sciences and applications; it also enhances the presence of Arab countries in the space sector which reflects the vision of the leadership in both countries and their efforts to achieve sustainable development and prosperity."

The NSSA shall work to refine and enhance the skills of its staff in the space field through cooperation in the research, training, information and knowledge exchange fields, as well as organising conferences, workshops and exhibitions relevant to satellite image applications in remote sensing and GIS fields. ■

Es'hail-2 in Commercial Service

Es'hailSat successfully completed in orbit tests and have begun commercial operations of Es'hail-2 located at 26°E orbital hot slot

Es'hailSat has announced today that its recently launched satellite, Es'hail-2, entered commercial service to serve government, broadcast and telecommunications sectors in the Middle East and North Africa.

Es'hail-2, designed with Ka-band spot beams and Ku-band wide beams, joins Es'hail-1 at 25.5°E / 26.0°E MENA broadcast hotspot and will augment the capacity already available at the hotspot to support premium services in the region. Broadcasters and channel owners can leverage on the reliability of the satellite to provide high-quality service and enhanced viewing experience to consumers, with high definition and ultra-high definition content. The satellite will also enable telecommunication companies and ISPs to provide reliable and secure telecommunications and broadband services.

Ali Al Kuwari, President and CEO of Es'hailSat, said: "I am extremely proud that Es'hail-2 has entered commercial service supporting customers in Middle East and North Africa, and I thank the diligent and hardworking teams at Es'hailSat and MELCO, for this success."

Built by Mitsubishi Electric Company (MELCO) and launched by Space X aboard Falcon 9 rocket, Es'hail-2 has a proven, modular platform with high power capability and flexibility for a broad range of applications. It will support the growth of 25.5°E / 26.0°E broadcast neighborhood, and also features multi-transponder Ka-



Ali Al Kuwari

band payload with sophisticated anti-jamming capabilities providing business and government sectors with secure communications across the MENA region. In addition, it carries the first ever payload on geostationary satellite to support amateur radio community across the visible earth from its orbital location. The spacecraft has a design life in excess of 16 years. **■**

Globecast partners with SnifferCat to advance OTT monetization with DAI

Globecast with SnifferCat to expand its OTT footprint by offering dynamic ad insertion (DAI), allowing customers to maximize OTT revenues. With its patented DAI technology, SnifferCat has simplified and automated the process for preparing unmarked content for distribution and monetization across multiple OTT platforms. As a revenue sharing model, Globecast is offering SnifferCat's automated, frame accurate, cue point detection for SCTE-35 tag inserts, enabling platform-agnostic dynamic ad insertion or overlay. It identifies breaks in OTT content, regardless of format or if it is VOD or live content, and then automatically inserts the correct tag for each distribution platform.

The SnifferCat solution does not disrupt or add to existing workflows. Automated cue point detection and tagging increase opportunities to drive revenues while multi-source software allows for vendor rationalization across CMS, ad servers and CDNs. Customers can also easily program their VOD/live events with auto-detect and tagging with SnifferCat's Scheduler product. **■**

Hughes promotes adoption of DVB-S2X standards for satellite transmission

Hughes has announced its participation as a founding member of and major patent contributor to the DVB-S2X joint licensing patent program ("patent pool"). DVB-S2X comprises the technical standard for satellite transmission, an extension of the DVB-S2 standard, that enables higher throughputs and greater bandwidth efficiency.

Developed originally by the DVB Project and incorporating a number of key patents from Hughes, DVB-S2X is an extension of the DVB-S2 specification adopted by the European Telecommunications Standards Institute ("ETSI"), which offers improved performance and features for core applications, including VSATs, Direct to Home (DTH) video and DSNG (Digital Satellite News Gathering). Employing DVB-S2X yields higher performance, interoperability and more efficient bandwidth utilization (bits per second per hertz) than previous standards. As a case in point, its integration into the Hughes JUPITER System for the wideband forward channel means operation of a single carrier is closer to the theoretical Shannon curve compared to DVB-S2. **■**

du partners with Telstra to offer dedicated video connectivity to MBC

Aftab Raza Khan

du has announced a new video contribution solution in partnership with Telstra. The partnership will provide MBC in Dubai with dedicated and fully managed video network service on the Telstra Global Media Network to facilitate reliable and high-quality video streaming to Europe. Through strategic partnerships with world-class video network providers du continues to build on its vision to provide best-in-class dedicated video services to multiple destinations worldwide.

Hany Aly Enterprise Vice President at du said: "Dedicated video solutions for moving content are gaining traction as they allow higher video rates and flexibility in terms of permanent or occasional use. du is increasingly trusted to distribute live content because we always ensure our solutions are customised for specific needs to maintain the highest levels of quality."

Andreas Eriksson, Acting Head of Telstra Broadcast Services, added: "We are delighted to add du and MBC in Dubai to the Telstra Global Media Network, extending our network capability in the Middle East. We have worked closely with du to add significant value for MBC with this



Andreas Eriksson



Hany Fahmy Aly

expansion, as well as enabling the creation and delivery of new services in the future. MBC will benefit from our simple, global and seamless solution for content distribution, allowing them to create new revenue streams in a more efficient and faster way."

Nader Mokhtar, Director of MCR and Broadcast technology in MBC, added: "We have designed and engineered the video solution with du/Telstra based on our experience, to avoid any single point of

failure and to have redundancy across all levels, fiber cables as well as any equipment along the different paths. In addition to monitoring points at each stage".

The combination of du teleport facilities and datamena datacenter enables content owners and players to contribute and distribute content in several ways. In addition, du's international media network provides superfast, secure and reliable global delivery of video, data and more. **■**

Speedcast Media Network expands media service offerings

Speedcast has expanded its Speedcast Media Network™ global infrastructure by integrating satellite, fiber, and cellular networks from Globecomm, the company's recent acquisition.

Speedcast Media Network provides secure point-to-point and point-to-multipoint live and linear digital video delivery anywhere in the world, with low latency and high availability. Speedcast has also added multiplatform processing and content management capabilities from Globecomm to Speedcast Media Network's portfolio of cloud video processing services, enabling increased efficiency and agility for any size media organization.

The combined hybrid network backbone and cloud video processing services offering from Speedcast Media Network is ideal for transporting video and data content from any origination source to any destination — in any format for multiple platforms — and for everything from aggregation and contribution to integrated channel playout, OTT streaming, and distribution.

Speedcast Media Network's cloud video processing services include Speedcast Vector, a virtualized integrated playout solution and digital headend that supports multiplatform processing for master control playout, encoding, and packaging, and takes advantage of the hybrid network for global distribution to multiple platforms. Speedcast Media Network also provides cloud-based content management for OTT streaming and video analytics.

With ubiquitous access to more than 80 satellites via the company's 40 teleports, Speedcast Media Network provides the most extensive satellite capacity globally and connects to an integrated fiber, cellular, MPLS backbone spanning 50 points of presence (POPS), with links to the AWS cloud. Speedcast Media Network also offers Global IP Transport, a fully-managed IP transport service for secure delivery of low-latency broadcast-quality content. The IP transport service provides guaranteed bandwidth with no congestion and 99.99 percent availability backed by intelligent network management. **■**

Newtec collaborates with Arabsat to successfully deploy Newtec Dialog Hubs in Europe

Newtec has successfully deployed two Newtec Dialog® hubs in the UK and Finland for Middle East satellite operator Arabsat to enable the company to deliver High Throughput Satellite (HTS) services into the Middle East and African markets.

Arabsat is the leading satellite service provider in the Arab world and has been serving the region with its telecommunications and broadcast services for more than 40 years. Despite the complexity of the project, and the many elements involved to bring it to completion, the commitment from both companies further reinforced the strong partnership that exists between Newtec and Arabsat, established over many years.

The contract, that will enable Arabsat to deliver a new suite of services including Enterprise and VNO services, IP Trunking and Mobile Backhaul for 3G and 4G services, was signed in September last year and the first hub was installed in December 2018.

"Both our teams worked tirelessly and collaborated with goodwill and professionalism to ensure that the project

was completed on time and on budget to Arabsat's exact requirements," said Sander Boom, Chief Operations Officer at Newtec. "I was impressed with the way in which our teams worked through any challenges together with one aim – to get the job done and to enable Arabsat to extend its service portfolio."

The Network Operations Center (NOC), recently installed at Arabsat's subsidiary Hellasat, in Athens, will see Arabsat able to reach all platforms and remote sites with its services. In combination with a variety of Newtec's DVB-S2X Wideband modems, the Newtec Dialog platform will enable Arabsat to offer vertical-specific solutions to deliver the best connectivity experience for any satellite application.


Wael Al-Buti, VP & Chief Commercial Officer at Arabsat, said: "I'd like to thank the team from Arabsat and Newtec for a job well done – the level of collaboration to execute the project with its challenging timeframe is truly exemplary. Our partnership with Newtec is vital for our growth and enables delivery of truly customized services for Arabsat customers." 

Mondo Globo selects Eutelsat CIRRUS to launch new Arabic TV offer

Eutelsat has secured the first customer for its recently launched Eutelsat CIRRUS delivery solution, with rapidly-growing video distributor, Mondo Globo/MCNC.

Telearabia PRO, Mondo Globo's new TV platform of Arabic-language SD channels, specifically targets the European hospitality sector. It comprises six premium Arabic lifestyle and entertainment channels, including three MBC Group channels. Fully-assembled through Eutelsat CIRRUS, the platform is available on Eutelsat's HOTBIRD neighbourhood located at 13° East and features live channel broadcasting, channel numbering, programme information and content security.

This offer has been confirmed by the luxury hotel brand Edwardian Hotels London and will be made available to guests who want to enjoy their favourite MENA channels while staying in the UK.

Cedric Aoun, President of Mondo Globo/MCNC: "Eutelsat CIRRUS is the ideal delivery system for our new Telearabia PRO offer, combining the strengths of traditional DTH with next-generation features, which will greatly benefit from the reach of Eutelsat's HOTBIRD neighbourhood. By adopting this turnkey assembly solution, we have been able to offer the first comprehensive Arabic TV offer to the hospitality market in Europe." 


Skyband selects LeoSat for Innovative Data Network

LeoSat has entered into an agreement with SKYBAND, a member of the Inteltec Group and satellite communications provider and networking solutions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

SKYBAND will use LeoSat to upgrade its existing satellite solutions, giving customers access to a unique low-latency network which is expected to revolutionize data connectivity.

LeoSat's system of low earth orbit communications satellites can achieve lower latency and stronger end-to-end security compared to traditional satellite and terrestrial solutions used today. This is achieved through an advanced and unique system architecture utilizing optical inter-satellite laser links which connect the satellites, creating fiber-like symmetry at Gigabits speeds while providing total security as the data is encrypted and secured from end-to-end across the network, with no terrestrial touch points.


Big Data is clearly driving the need for new communications infrastructure and data volumes are exploding, with global networks already carrying more than 1 Zeta Byte of traffic and this is forecast to grow exponentially. This increasing demand to move large quantities of data quickly and securely around the world is fast outpacing the infrastructure needed to carry it. LeoSat's unique new network has been designed to solve these essential communications and connectivity issues and provide new opportunities for business sectors such as multi-national enterprise, telecommunications, oil & gas, maritime and government services.

LeoSat's CCO, Ronald van der Breggen, said: "Global Enterprises today require instant infrastructure from anywhere to everywhere which is fast, secure and reliable. So LeoSat is taking data networking into space, setting a new bar for high-speed data connectivity." 



MEET ICT & BITEK 2019 was innovative with adaptive digital transformation

The successful inauguration for the 9th edition of Meet ICT and BITEK Event under the Patronage of H.E. Mr. Mohammed Ali Al Qaed on behalf of the event patron were attended by top VIPs, ICT key-players, decision-makers and ICT enthusiasts from all over the region. More than 500 delegates from 20 different countries joined in the 9th edition of Meet ICT Conference and BITEK Exhibition last 19th-21st March in Gulf Convention Center, Gulf Hotel Bahrain.

The conference featured over 20 sessions and 33 International speakers all came together to inspire decision-makers and leaders to improve their knowledge and expertise in the IT field. 



STC launches 'Future Solutions' platform to support young Saudi talent



Saudi Arabia's Business Communications announced the launch of the Future Solutions Platform, which aims to support Saudi talent in technology and innovation, to invest and provide innovative technology solutions and to create an environment conducive to local talent to help make Saudi Arabia a strong competitor in the world of modern technology.

STC honored the winners of the Traffic Management Challenge with cash prizes. The first place team was led by Abdulkarim Al-Thuwaini and Ayoub Al-Issa. The second team place was won by Mohammed Kassem and Ahmad Qassem, and won the third place Talal Al-Tamimi, Ammar Nabulsi, Faisal Al-Arini, and won the third place repeated team consisting of Hossam Arqobi, Mohammed Dahian, Abdulaziz Tamra.

The Dathathon Traffic Management Competition aims to raise awareness of the importance of big data and knowledge sharing by developing participants' skills to reach professional levels. Datathon is one of the most important technical competitions in the region. It simulates reality and supports the access of participants to advanced data, as well as many training programs that enable them

to access the advanced technical environment in the field of data analysis and utilization.

"The Future Solutions Platform is the first of its kind in the Kingdom to support talented young people to experience and develop innovative solutions that drive them to improve their skills," said Dr. Tarig Enaya, Senior Vice President of Business Unit at Saudi Telecom. "We are proud to honor the sons and daughters who participated in the competition and won the first places, and we are constantly seeking to achieve a high level of creating opportunities and the spirit of competition and digital innovation through introducing of such competitions, where participated in the competitions of the "traffic management" more than 195 participants and participants from different regions of KSA."

"Dathathon Traffic Management helps in assessing the level of knowledge in the big data area of the participants and contributing to the creation of a qualified generation of young people who have the ability to take advantage of the big data available, analyze and turn it into useful information, To meet and exchange knowledge and expertise in the field of big data in the Kingdom. 📌

Batelco and Ericsson to launch 5G in Bahrain



Ericsson has been selected by Batelco to commercially deploy 5G to enhance the digital lives of people, enterprises and industries across Bahrain. The nationwide 5G deployment will happen in phases in key locations. Ericsson's high-speed and low-latency 5G technology will help Batelco meet growing data traffic demands and deliver high-quality enhanced mobile broadband and fixed wireless access experiences.

The shift to 5G will bring enhanced mobile broadband to data-hungry subscribers across Bahrain with huge speed and low-latency changes in on-the-go user experiences such as streaming, downloading, gaming, infotainment, and interactivity.

5G will also enable Batelco to help open-up opportunities in the Internet of Things (IoT) and Industry 4.0 on a global scale to enterprises and industries in Bahrain.

Batelco's stated mission is to drive network leadership in Bahrain and provide customers with next-generation mobile technologies. It recently achieved Bahrain's first 3GPP-compliant 5G data call on a commercial mobile network using a 5G pocket router. The call used Ericsson Radio System



solutions and 5G Cloud Packet Core.

Batelco Bahrain CEO Mohamed Bubashait says "Batelco is committed to delivering exceptional customer experience through provisioning of seamless, advanced mobile services over 5G. We are therefore very pleased to strengthen our strategic partnership with Ericsson to commercially deploy 5G – to enhance our mobile network and services for people across Bahrain."

Rafiah Ibrahim, Head of Market Area Middle East & Africa at Ericsson says: "Today, we are partnering with Batelco for a 5G commercial deployment in Bahrain. 5G promises to accelerate the digitization of industries, offering service providers with new opportunities and enabling them to launch the most advanced technologies while improving the end-user experience with higher data speeds and lower latency." 📌

Nedaa showcased Smart City capabilities at GISEC 2019

Nedaa, the Dubai Government security networks provider, participated in GISEC. Nedaa displayed a diverse range of Smart City solutions enabled through its 4G Network, designed to improve the quality of the services provided to Nedaa customers, and to raise and improve the communication and operational efficiency.

Nedaa highlighted in cooperation with its technology arm Esharah Etisalat Security Solutions and its partner the latest smart cities technologies delivered over its private network; providing support for a variety of applications for different fields in a smart city environment. Nedaa is addressing how key security, safety and privacy challenges can be addressed while connecting drones to a smart city infrastructure; revealing a wide array of IoT and Machine to Machine (M2M) solutions enabling and supporting the Smart Dubai Plan 2021.

Nedaa's live video streaming services is deployed using smart phones over its mission critical network for increased security. Those devices allowing instant group communications, snapshots of critical moments and live-stream videos to exchange data safely.

Additionally, Nedaa addressed smart city initiatives through its network offerings for an ultra-reliable remote control system for high speed drones required for increasing the operational efficiency for the different fields in smart city such as harbor operational automation. Its services were also extended to demos on 5G secure devices for faster connectivity; operational efficiency with private LTE utilized in different smart cities fields such as Gas mining and airports; and enabling smart venue experiences with 5G small cells and optical LAN.



"Smart cities based on shared operational and security intelligence run more efficiently, gather better insights and can deliver better services to improve the lives of residents. As a leading security networks provider, we are excited to join GISEC, bringing forth technologies and solutions utilized by our partners for creating secure applications, and to make life better in the digital age. GISEC as a platform has given us an opportunity to demonstrate the role we play in delivering smarter and safer cities, and the challenges tackled in order to develop solutions to address them. We aim to offer best-in-class smart connectivity over our network in order to enable cities become 'smarter' and more connected." commented H.E. Mansoor Bu Osaiba, Chief Executive Officer, Nedaa. **T**

Esharah unleashes Smart City Innovations at GISEC 2019

Esharah Etisalat Security Solutions, experts in the field of wired and wireless Telecom Networks (TETRA & Public Safety LTE), and Security Solutions; showcased smart IoT innovations at this year's GISEC 2019.

Esharah's participation in the 7th edition of the event endorses its efforts towards providing more integrated solutions for customers that harness innovative technologies to enhance city management, manage transportation challenges and implement smart living for residents.

The company's new and advanced Internet of Things (IoT) solutions for businesses and cities developed across verticals are the latest addition to its existing suite for smart city products, software and services. Esharah demonstrates its intelligently engineered Smart Car Park Platform that utilizes Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and predictive analytic capabilities with advanced sensors and wireless communications to enable carpark operators to manage multiple parking systems concurrently. When implemented, these solutions will result in reducing operating and maintenance

costs. Residents will also benefit from improved parking experiences.

Also on showcase was Esharah's best-of-breed IoT technologies that support holistic smart applications such as smart indoor tracking and waste management monitoring. Indoor tracking applications have varied uses, from retail to tracking cars in a parking facility, and numerous technologies such as WiFi, Bluetooth Low-Energy (BLE), Ultrasonic, Computer Vision, etc., can be deployed to track assets indoors.

"Intelligent IoT platforms have essential roles to play in the evolution of smart cities; delivering optimized efficiency and enhanced experiences for citizens. As a key enabler for smart city transformation, Esharah leverages the latest technologies to boost innovation, optimize services and foster economic development with solutions that improve the lives of citizens. We are very excited to be part of this event, to share our expertise for building smarter, future tech cities; ensuring technologies developed are "secure by design" for economic, social and environmental sustainability." said Ali Bahloq, General Manager Esharah Etisalat Security Solutions. **T**

OPPO leads the 5G revolution through collaboration with Etisalat for the first 5G smartphone test in the region

As a pioneer in 5G technology, OPPO connected with regional telecom service providers, regulators, and global ICT solution providers to accelerate the commercialization of 5G enabled smartphones at the 5G MENA 2019 summit held in Dubai from April 7-9, 2019. To further its commitment of developing the 5G ecosystem, OPPO has collaborated with Etisalat to test the compatibility of OPPO 5G smartphones with Etisalat's 5G network to ensure that user experience reaches the level for commercial use. This is the first 5G smartphone test between carrier and smartphone in GCC region.

At this year's 5G MENA summit, Zhang Zhi, 5G Expert from OPPO presented the company's vision of being a 5G era pioneer. This included a keynote speech on 9th April as well as a panel discussion with representatives from Etisalat and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority.

"While the underlying 5G network infrastructure is vital to a connected future, the capacity of super-powerful 5G networks only matters when people can leverage these benefits in their everyday lives," says Andy Shi, Preside of OPPO Middle East & Africa. "This makes the pivot to 5G all the more important to our industry."

"This year is the first of 5G commercialization and is set to be a game-changer that revolutionizes the smartphone industry", adds Shi. ". At OPPO, we have always focused on the user experience and know that today's consumers expect their smartphone to leverage 5G to bring about more immersive, seamless and intuitive digital services."

Commenting on the collaboration with OPPO, Khaled Elkhoully, Chief Consumer Officer, Etisalat, said: "We at Etisalat are excited to work closely with OPPO to test the compatibility of its 5G smartphones with our 5G network, ensuring that user experience reaches the level for commercial use. It is part of our commitment to build partnerships with world leading smartphone manufacturers and technology leaders, and



enable our customers to enjoy the best-in-class performance and our 5G network that boasts of ultra-high speeds and low latency services.

"Our management's strategy to focus on digital innovation and to 'Drive the digital future to empower societies' have led to investments in superior and state-of-the-art technology solutions on the network. With continuous investments in technology and innovation on the network, Etisalat's infrastructure can enable 5G connectivity today for all fixed and mobile devices expected to be launched in the first half of this year." Added Elkhoully.

At the summit, Zhang Zhi highlighted OPPO's belief that 5G will form the essential foundation for our future smart world. He added that 5G will enable realization of the Internet of Everything vision, and emphasize experience over everything else. 5G will further empower the development of "cognitive intelligence" and accelerate the evolution of the Artificial Intelligence of Things, or AIoT.

OPPO remains committed to be one of the key contributors to the 5G ecosystem in the region and is helping shape the next generation of connectivity through

contributions in research, software and hardware development, deep consumer insight and a robust ecosystem of strong industry partners.

The company recently launched its "5G Landing Project" with several operator partners to accelerate the commercialization of 5G products and services worldwide. Last month, OPPO also announced that its first 5G smartphone has successfully passed 5G CE tests conducted by Sporton International Inc., making it compliant with EU requirements in areas such as wireless, electromagnetic compatibility, health and safety.

OPPO formed a 5G standardization team as early as 2015 to focus on the research and development of 5G standards. To date, OPPO has obtained more than 1,000 global patents related to 5G technology, and partnered with industry heavyweights such as chipmaker Qualcomm on their '5G Pioneer' initiative.

The company is consistently ranked among the top five smartphone brands in the world and in January 2019 opened its second regional hub within the UAE, making Dubai its new center for operations in the Middle East & Africa. **T**

Omantel launches an international wholesale entity to expand its global service offering

Omantel Wholesale has launched an international wholesale company called Omantel International (OTI). The public announcement took place during the Capacity Middle East 2019 event in Dubai, UAE. OTI is managing Omantel's international voice business and supports partners and customers with simple and efficient access to new and existing solutions. It was incorporated with a seamless migration of its customers in Q2 2018 and will see a growing number of voice agreements and other services added to its portfolio in the near future.



Baha Allawati

"Omantel is growing and there is tremendous momentum behind our business. We have created this international entity to continue supporting our global customers with the best possible service and offerings that address their needs. The creation of OTI is a milestone for our business and demonstrates our commitment to offering global solutions that can adopt, evolve and proactively

shape our customers' demand, and furnish them with differentiated experience" said Baha Allawati, General Manager of Carrier and Roaming Services of Omantel. "I'm extremely proud of our team. They have been exceptional in delivering the strategy and execution in such a short pace of time. OTI is phased to cater for international voice services while other services would

potentially be also incorporated in the near future."

Omantel has investments in 20 subsea cable systems with landings in more than 120 locations around the world. Capitalizing on Oman's unique geographic position enables Omantel to offer ultra-low latency networking (ULTN) to various communications hubs in the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Europe. ULTN also enables innovation in applications and services and catalyze the foundation for Digital Transformation globally.

Omantel offers direct access to more than 50 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East and North America while connect and optimise its partners' applications and services. Its suite of solutions enables local and global carriers, cloud and content providers and enterprises customers to deliver exceptional Quality of Service and Experience to end users in both developing and developed markets. **■**

Afghan Wireless Communication Company extends partnership with Optiva to continuously deliver value for the Afghan Market

Optiva has secured a significant upgrade and multi-year support agreement with Afghan Wireless Communication Company (AWCC) for its Optiva Charging Engine™, Voucher Management and Policy Control solutions.

"Over our more than 10-year partnership, Optiva has earned our trust to deploy and support mission-critical, real-time converged charging and policy control solutions for us," said Managing Director and Board Member of AWCC Amin Ramin. "Working closely with Optiva team, this upgrade will enable us to increase monetization, offer new value to our customers and prepare us for migration to a public cloud environment with unmatched scalability."

AWCC needed a portfolio offering with a robust roadmap that would position and ready them for a future public cloud solution. Their upgrade provides a roadmap to the public cloud and equips AWCC with the functional capabilities to tap into the growth potential of Afghanistan. The upgrade will also help AWCC advance its growth strategy and gain capabilities for targeting new customer segments. Also, the upgrade will allow them to eventually run their BSS stack,

including real-time charging, through remote operations and management. This will improve AWCC's resiliency and operational challenges compared to running the stack via the traditional, on-premise deployment models.

"Optiva's remote delivery expertise enabled us to accomplish our goals despite the extreme and challenging conditions in Afghanistan. As they maintain our BSS platform and continue to support our business operations, these capabilities will afford us ongoing access to feature-rich and advanced solutions," said Ramin.

"AWCC will continue to set milestones of innovation in telecom, and Optiva will remain a ready partner to help them succeed in challenging conditions and a competitive, rapidly-changing market," said Danielle Royston, CEO of Optiva. "The upgrade allows us to help AWCC further achieve their strategic business goals and position them for even greater success in the future with the transition to the public cloud. Our role as their partner is to maximize the value they receive today while preparing them for transformation tomorrow." **■**

Oman Data Park enhances its managed security service offering with Fortinet's Secure SD-WAN



Alain Penel
Vice President –
Middle East, Fortinet



Maitham Al Lawati
GM Risk & Compliance
Oman Data Park

Fortinet has announced that Oman Data Park (ODP) has expanded its managed security services offering by adding the Fortinet Secure SD-WAN solution to its portfolio. This announcement strengthens a long-standing seven years partnership between Oman Data Park and Fortinet.

Founded in 2012, Oman Data Park is the Sultanate's premier Managed Services Provider offering both local and international organisations with Infrastructure, AI, Cloud, Public cloud, and Managed security services.

"Oman Data Park enjoys a strategic partnership with Fortinet where they provide us with security solutions for our managed network security services business. Our aim is to provide the best security services and maximum return on investment for our customers who place their trust on us to manage their next-generation security requirements. By adding Fortinet's powerful and secure SD-WAN to our services, we are not only strengthening

our relationship with Fortinet and enhancing our portfolio, but also allowing our customers to benefit from the unique combination of security, flexibility, single-pane-of-glass management and cost savings with minimal to no additional investment," said Maitham Al Lawati, General Manager - Risk & Compliance at Oman Data Park.

Fortinet's Secure SD-WAN solution enables the efficient, automated, SLA-based utilisation of their WAN resources for Internet and cloud-based service access. ODP's customers have benefitted from these capabilities to replace their separate WAN routers, WAN optimisation products, and security devices with a single solution that is secure, application-aware and offers automatic WAN path control and multi-broadband support. It greatly improves application performance while reducing WAN operating expenses and management complexity. Fortinet's SD-WAN has also helped ODP customers to secure their applications hosted on ODP cloud, including email and web applications security and

Advanced Threat Protection (ATP).

"Oman Data Park is one of Fortinet's first MSSP partners in the region and we are pleased to see our relationship growing stronger through our shared goals – that of providing customers with critical next-generation security solutions," said Alain Penel, Regional Vice President – Middle East, Fortinet. "Secure SD-WAN is a native component of the Fortinet Security Fabric and the FortiGate Next-Generation Firewall, and ODP's customers will benefit from having such tools for undergoing digital transformation without the security risks inherent to other solutions that don't take a security-first approach"

ODP have standardized their managed security services with Fortinet's FortiGate appliances to offer customers UTM and NGFW services. Based on customers requirements, ODP provides FortiGate appliances ranging from the entry-level FortiGate 30E series, to the high-end FortiGate 3700D series. **■**

The Internet Society - Response to Zuckerberg's call to regulate "the Internet"

March Zuckerberg has recently called to regulate the Internet – can you believe he used the wrong term?

ISOC has issued a statement about why he's incorrect and why there is danger in regulating the Internet. Let me know if you are interested in using this!

We continue to see calls from governments, countries, and now Mark Zuckerberg to "regulate the Internet." It's important to note that "Internet regulation" is a loaded and misguided term. In reality, what needs to be addressed are issues of anticompetitive behavior, content moderation, and the handling of personal data. None of these issues takes place "on the Internet." Instead, they occur at the applications' layer of the Internet – what we refer to as the World Wide Web. So essentially, Zuckerberg's call to regulate "the Internet" is incorrect.



Salam Yamout
Regional Director, ISOC Middle East

However, there are governments and others that are also looking to regulate the infrastructure of the Internet – which is something the Internet Society is strongly against. Regulation could have unintended

consequences. It will not succeed because the Internet is based on voluntary agreements between networks.

It is based on relationships of trust and on the ability of networks to talk to one another without constraints. Even if a network is constrained, controlled or regulated in one country, the other networks will continue to connect to each other regardless.

The more there is a push to try to make the Internet fit within national borders or to make it comply with one nation's regulatory thinking for the sake of maintaining some sense of control, the more we risk sabotaging the diversity that is critical for its resilient and global nature.

A regulatory race in the Internet can lead to wrong incentives that will result in a fractured, less resilient Internet. **■**

CCA partners with Parallel Wireless to provide End-to-End Network Solutions for Mobile Operators

Parallel Wireless has announced a strategic partnership to provide network infrastructure for CCA's carrier members to cost-effectively accelerate and enable their 4G expansion and 5G network migration to better serve rural America, businesses and consumers. Parallel Wireless also is a CCA associate member.

According to the 2019 Statista report, only 78% of the US rural population has access to the Internet, comparing to 92% in urban areas. There are economical and technical challenges that contribute to this digital divide, including cost of deployment, access to spectrum, equipment interoperability and high operational cost in low density areas.

With the need to expand the 4G network

and with 5G on the horizon, rural carriers are looking for cost-effective network solutions that will improve their business models and help them to not only survive but also thrive.

A key goal of CCA and Parallel Wireless's strategic partnership is to provide CCA's members with cost-effective solutions to close this digital divide — not only to begin experiencing cost savings and operational efficiency, but also to future-proof their networks for 5G and adapt to policy and regulations changes.

Steven K. Berry, President & CEO of CCA said, "CCA is pleased to partner with Parallel Wireless to provide our members with a fully-virtualized 4G and 5G Open RAN solution that is flexible and optimized for

cost-effective rural coverage. The goal is to help smaller carriers reduce deployment cost, increase revenues, provide ubiquitous connectivity for their customers, whether businesses or individuals, and get their networks ready for 5G, and we are delighted to work with Parallel Wireless in this special partnership."

Steve Libbey, VP of Sales, Parallel Wireless said, "We are excited to support CCA members by offering our innovative and cost-effective 4G and 5G solutions. We are confident that deployment of Parallel Wireless's unique architecture can help bridge the digital divide and enable business transformation. We're looking forward to continuing to support CCA and their members to help them achieve their business goals." **■**

President of CRA meets with ITU Deputy Secretary-General

H.E. Mohammed Ali Al-Mannai, President of the Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) met with H.E. Malcolm Johnson, the Deputy Secretary-General of ITU.

The visit is in line with CRA's aim to communicate and cooperate with related Arab and International organizations and to present the latest developments in the ICT sector in Qatar.

"CRA welcomes ITU's visit. We ensure that Qatar leads in the ICT field at the regional level; to this CRA maintain regular communications with the ITU, to discuss bilateral cooperation and to stay up to date with the latest developments in the ICT sector. This in turn helps us to develop the sector taking into consideration international best practices and standards, and to ensure the provision of smart, innovative, and high-quality services to the consumers in Qatar," said H.E. Al-Mannai.

As part of the visit, the Deputy Secretary-General of the ITU met with the telecommunications service providers to have a look at the latest technologies, developments and achievements in the ICT sector. He also met with some academic entities and discussed the importance and role of education in the development of the ICT sector.

"We had a fruitful discussion on a range of issues during my visit, including opportunities for sponsorship and donation for the new ITU headquarters," said ITU Deputy Secretary-General Malcolm



Johnson. "I look forward to continued collaboration as Qatar seeks to boost its digital economy through the development of its information and communication technology sector in line with international standards. We are confident that working with ITU and its increasingly diverse range of members will benefit Qataris across the country in the years to come." **■**

CRA resolved 92% of telecom consumers complaints in 2018

The Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) resolved 92% of telecom consumers' complaints received in 2018. CRA engaged with telecom service providers to resolve and discuss solutions for all the complaints, which were related to several topics such as billing, weak mobile network coverage, weak Internet speed, fixed-line disconnection and delays in service installation and activation.

CRA received 4,342 inquiries and 1,005 complaints from consumers about telecom services in Qatar, these complaints were evaluated by CRA based on a set of criteria to determine their validity to CRA's complaint process; 603 were valid complaints and 402 were invalid, and CRA resolved 92% of the total complaints.

CRA is working with the service providers to finalize the related investigation of the remaining ones and expects to resolve them during the coming weeks.



"CRA ensures that telecom consumers are aware of their rights and responsibilities; to this end, CRA provides them with related awareness tips through social media and outreach events to ensure that they have the best experience with telecom services. On the other hand, CRA works to resolve consumers' complaints based on the Telecommunications Law, Telecom Consumer Protection Policy and a set

of regulations, developed to ensure the provision of smart, innovative and high-quality services to the consumers in Qatar," said Amel Salem Al-Hanawi, Consumer Affairs Manager, CRA.

The statistics indicate that 68% of all complaints were related to mobile services; 47% of mobile services complaints were related to billing issues including excess billing for postpaid services, and uncashed decrease in the credit balance for prepaid services. Service disconnections complaints were 11% out of the mobile complaints and weak mobile network coverage complaints for both indoor and outdoor were 8% out of it. As for fixed-line services, the statistics indicate that it was 32% of the total complaints; out of these complaints 36% were related to service disconnections, while 35% related to billing, 15% related to delay in fixed-line service transfer, installation or activation, and 5% were related to slow Internet speed. **■**


African artificial intelligence pioneer and Cortex Logic CEO, Dr. Jacques Ludik, awarded AI Leader Of The Year

South African based Artificial Intelligence Software & Solutions veteran and founder of Cortex Logic, awarded premium accolade at Africa's Tech Week event, underlying a life dedicated to AI and Data Science Innovation.

Dr. Ludik is an African based smart technology entrepreneur and Artificial Intelligence investor / AI ecosystem builder, holds a PhD in Computer Science and has amassed 25+ years' experience in the study and exploitation of AI & Data Science in real-world applications. Ludik was formally a founder of Bennit AI, Mosaic, SynerG, and CSense Systems, the latter being Africa's first AI company sold to General Electric in 2011. Over his career, Jacques has published a wide range of papers on AI, Advanced Analytics, Machine Learning, and Data Science and is a big supporter of AI for social good. He is currently Founder & CEO of Cortex Logic and Founder President of the Machine Intelligence Institute of Africa (MIIA). Dr. Jacques Ludik said, "It's such an honor to receive an award and this one is special because it comes at a time when AI is moving beyond the hype and into the realm of real-world application both in the Enterprise and society in general."

Ludik went on to say, "My current focus is two-fold; at Cortex Logic we are now building a series of products and platforms embracing all aspects of Artificial Intelligence to help businesses solve complex business problems using the power of machine learning, deep learning, Internet of Things (IoT) and Big Data & Analytics. At the Machine Intelligence Institute of Africa, we are building a community that aims to leverage AI for social good, education and transformative change in wider African society. It's been a passion of mine for many years and there has never been a better time for young engineers, entrepreneurs, business & governments to begin their journey into the 4th Industrial Revolution."



Ludik concluded, "Every sector of society and commerce will be impacted by AI and I cannot wait to see what the future holds. However, we have some key challenges to solve around the ethics and impact AI will have on society so it's imperative that we all begin to focus on this debate and how this smart technology era will be leveraged for positive change, growth, and benefit for all. I look forward to the next 25 years of change and will continue to focus on the positive impact this could have not only in Africa but the entire world." 

AfricaCom launches new event in 2019 - AfricaTech

AfricaCom has announced the launch of AfricaTech - a new event brand dedicated to propelling Africa towards the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Recent years have seen a surge in interest in enterprise digital transformation. Disruptive new technologies such as Internet of Things, Blockchain and Artificial Intelligence, quite recently considered to be 'on the horizon', are now being implemented.


Just like the industries we champion, AfricaCom is evolving. Our enterprise

audience is growing fast as more CIOs, CDOs, CTOs and IT leaders seek expert insights on emerging technologies.

AfricaTech, which will be co-located with AfricaCom, has been designed to help our enterprise audience successfully navigate their digital transformation journeys. It will bring together enterprise CIO, CTO, CDO and digital leads from all major industry sectors.

AfricaTech is co-located with AfricaCom and will take over the whole of Cape Town's CTICC 2. A zoned exhibition is split into

dedicated technology zones dedicated to Internet of Things, Blockchain, Artificial Intelligence, Fintech, Cloud Computing and Data Centres with premium conferences on the show floor, meet-the-buyer features, technology and industry-specific deep dive sessions and brand-new social features and spaces.

For over 2 years, there has been no better place to meet everybody who's anybody in African connectivity and communications than AfricaCom. AfricaTech will ensure that the same now applies to enterprise digital transformation. 

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GLOBAL ICT, TELECOM & SATCOM EVENTS

<p>April 2019</p>  <p>Telecom Leader Summit Dubai, UAE</p>	<p>01 - 02 August 2019</p>  <p>Satellite & Space Mission Dublin Ireland</p>	<p>24 - 25 September 2019</p>  <p>Telecoms World ME Dubai, UAE</p>
<p>17 June 2019</p>  <p>Satellite Industrial Forum Singapore</p>	<p>TBA</p>  <p>TechExpo Brunei Darussalam</p>	<p>06 - 10 October 2019</p>  <p>GITEX Dubai, UAE</p>
<p>18 - 20 June 2019</p>  <p>CommunicAsia Singapore</p>	<p>09 - 12 September 2019</p>  <p>ITU Telecom World Budapest, Hungary</p>	<p>15 - 17 October 2019</p>  <p>Broadband World Forum Amsterdam</p>
<p>19 June 2019</p>  <p>Asia Communication Award Singapore</p>	<p>10 - 12 September 2019</p>  <p>5G Asia Singapore</p>	<p>05 - 07 November 2019</p>  <p>Global Milsatcom London</p>
<p>26 - 27 June 2019</p>  <p>Seamless Asia Singapore</p>	<p>12 - 17 September 2019</p>  <p>IBC Amsterdam, Netherland</p>	<p>12 - 14 November 2019</p>  <p>AfricaCom Capetown, South Africa</p>
<p>26 - 28 June 2019</p>  <p>GSMA MWC Shanghai China</p>	<p>22 - 24 September 2019</p>  <p>Critical Communication MENA Dubai, UAE</p>	<p>03 - 06 December 2019</p>  <p>Bakutel Baku, Azerbaijan</p>



Satellite Industry Forum 2019

17 June 2019, Four Seasons Hotel Singapore
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As 2019 progresses, it will be of interest for many to find out what trends the satellite industry will see play out this year, as well as what the key drivers of growth will be for operators and customers alike.

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