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BORDERLESS CELTEL

Author / organisation	allAfrica.com
Year recorded	2007
Region	Africa
Category	Other
Original source	allafrica.com
Archive page	kiwanja.net/mobile-database/borderless-celtel/

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Borderless Network Coverage for Celtel?

Highway Africa News Agency (Grahamstown)

NEWS
23 November 2007
Posted to the web 23 November 2007

By Remmy Nweke

The pan-African mobile communications provider, Celtel, has introduced its 'One Network'solution for mobile users in the region of West Africa.

This introduction would afford Celtel subscribers in most African countries to use their mobile phones outside their borders without alternating their Subscribers Identification Modulation (SIM) card.

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Users will also be able to reload and recharge their mobile phones with local currencies within the countries they travel without roaming charges.

Speaking at the launch of the 'One Network' solution, the chief executive of Celtel Nigeria, Mr. Adebayo Ligali, noted that the package, which is the first on the continent by Celtel and the world at large, is to empower the telco's subscribers across all 'one-network' countries.

"Prepaid customers can recharge their phones with local recharge cards while travelling in any of the 'One Network' countries," he declared, stressing that account balance would be available to subscribers in their own home currency as well as access the customer careline and voicemail using familiar home country short codes.

Mr. Ligali added that subscribers would not have to pay for received calls while travelling outside their immediate country domain.

The Celtel boss pointed out that the 'one network' service has been activated for both prepaid and post-paid subscribers on the network.

"You can use this service immediately, no registration is required and there is no need to switch tariffs before you leave your home country," he explained.

Reiterating the commitment of Celtel on the continent and to the West African region, Ligali said:

"We're proud to be described as the world's first borderless network, connecting over 400 million people across 12 countries in an area more than twice the size of Europe. This service is noted as a world first and indeed an innovation."

Mr. Ligali emphasised that the "One network' solution strongly underscores the pan-African community spirit and recognizes the artificial nature of most African borders.

"Above all, it is further strengthening the family bonds, which the continent is highly noted for as it enables people to conveniently keep in close touch with their kith and kin as they travel around the African continent doing their business," he enthused.

Also speaking, the executive vice chairman of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), Dr. Ernest Ndukwe, congratulated Celtel for this feat, stressing that this kind of evolution was why the West African Telecommunications Regulatory Agency (WATRA) was actually set up to help bring about a borderless area for phone users.

Ndukwe said that the NCC was determined to use WATRA to ensure that Nigerians could have one network service rather than continue to change SIM Cards whenever they are on the move. "At least, for the first time, Africa has something that it can export to the other parts of the world," he asserted, noting the difficulties subscribers face when making calls outside their country's borders.

"We all know how difficult it was to make calls to neighbouring African countries as the calls will have to go to Europe first before connecting. But with what we're seeing today, one day the whole of Africa will have one network," Dr. Ndukwe declared.

Meanwhil, the minister of state for information and communication, Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki Nakande said, the 'One Network' package being introduced by Celtel, is an indication of the pride Africa has in the business of telecommunications.

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