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Africa gets borderless calling with One Network

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Pan-African operator Celtel International has extended the reach of the 'borderless' One Network, giving almost half of Africa's population the ability to make calls at local rates across 12 countries throughout the continent.

Celtel, a subsidiary of the Zain Group, has extended the borderless mobile network to Burkina Faso, Chad, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria and Sudan. These countries now join

the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, which were part of the initial launch of the One Network in September 2006.

Since its launch more than 2 million people have already used the service, and this latest extension means that the network covers an area more than twice the size of the European Union.

All Celtel's customers, both prepaid and postpaid, in the 12 countries from East, Central and West Africa, will be able to use this service, making calls and sending SMSes at local rates and receiving incoming calls free of charge. Users can top up prepaid phones with locally bought airtime cards which can be bought at more than 500,000 points of sale.

Announcing the One Network expansion at the AfricaCom conference in Cape Town, South Africa this week, Zain's CEO Saad Al Barrak said, "We have revolutionised telecommunications in Africa and we intend to roll out this service to more of our operations on the African continent and in the Middle East."

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