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## DEPOSIT OF THE INSTRUMENT OF RATIFICATION OF THE ATU CONSTITUTION AND CONVENTION

Ambassador Zouheir Allagui of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Tunisia to the Organization of African Unity in Addis Ababa made a specific visit to Nairobi on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2002 to hand over his country's Instrument of Ratification of the ATU Constitution and Convention to the Secretary General.

At a ceremony held at ATU Temporary Headquarters in Nairobi, the Tunisian Ambassador deposited with Mr. Jan MUTAI, Secretary General of the African Telecommunications Union (ATU), the Instrument of Ratification of the Constitution and Convention by Tunisia. The ceremony was witnessed by Mr. Samuel CHEPKONG'A, Director General of the Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK).

Welcoming the Tunisian Ambassador, the ATU Secretary General thanked him for making the journey from Addis Ababa to Nairobi to hand over the instrument. He recalled the unflinching support Tunisia had been giving ATU. He said that Tunisia's payment of a voluntary contribution in addition to the regular yearly contributions has assisted the Union in its institutional capacity building and the delivery of greater value to members.

On the issue of private sector participation in the activities of the Union, that is the main thrust of the new constitution, he said that so far ten African private operators have joined the Union as Associate Members.

He also referred to the new processes which the Union is now using to evolve African Common Proposals/Positions (ACPs) that involve both public and private sectors which is enabling Africa's 'voice' to be louder and more coherent in global treaty-making and standards-setting conferences. One of the recent successes was the Resolution (Com 4-7a) of the World Telecommunications Development Conference, Istanbul 2002, on support of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) that was sponsored by the Union.

He commended Tunisia for sponsoring Resolution 73 of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Minneapolis, USA which instructed the holding of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva in 2003 and Tunis in 2005. He expressed his gratitude to the Government and People of Tunisia for their support to the Union. Tunisia's Instrument of Ratification is the fifth instrument received by ATU General Secretariat after those of Kenya, Nigeria and Egypt and the instrument of Accession by Chad.

The Tunisian Ambassador in his remarks underlined the importance of communication as an indispensable tool for development. He said that his country's ratification of the Constitution and Convention of ATU should be seen essentially as an act of faith and belief in the opportunities communications offer for the development of the continent. He said that the development of the ICT figured prominently in the programme of action of NEPAD to be finally adopted in a few days by Africa at the OAU/AU Summit in Durban, South Africa.

On the World Summit on Information Society, he said that Tunisia's sponsorship of the event was his country's contribution to Africa's progress.

After a brief overview of achievements in the communications sector in Tunisia especially in the areas of Internet Access, International Gateways and Teledensity, he underscored the major role which the private sector is playing in the ICT industry in Tunisia.

Before depositing the Instrument of Ratification, he thanked ATU Secretary General for the warm welcome accorded him and expressed his willingness to work closely with ATU for the promotion of ICT in Africa. He expressed thanks to the Director General of CCK for representing Kenya to witness the event.

The Director General of CCK on behalf of the Government of Kenya expressed his appreciation to the Ambassador for his visit. He praised Tunisia for the remarkable role which the private sector is playing in its ICT sector and stressed the need for private sector participation in ATU. He referred to the achievements of the private sector in Kenya and his country's determination to raise its teledensity. He commended Tunisia for originating the idea of holding the World Summit on the Information Society which was materialised by ITU Resolution 73 of the Minneapolis Plenipotentiary Conference.

### **About ATU**

African Telecommunications Union (ATU) is a Specialised Agency of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in the field of Telecommunications. Its aim and purpose is to promote the rapid development of info-communications in Africa in order to achieve universal access and service, in addition to full inter-country connectivity, in the most effective manner through :-

- ❖ Adoption of appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks in Africa;
- ❖ Promotion of investment and funding of telecommunications development in the region;
- ❖ Promotion of programmes for the development of the African Information Society;
- ❖ Fostering cooperation and partnerships between and among Member States and Associate Members;
- ❖ Coordination in Areas of projects, value-added services, interconnection standards and harmonisation of tariffs.
- ❖ Promotion of rapid human resource development to fill the skills shortages in ICT Sector.

Besides being an Inter-Governmental Organisation (IGO), ATU is also a public-private sector partnership between Governments and ICT Industry for harmonization of regional policies, regulations and standards.

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A specialised Agency of OAU for Telecommunications  
...unlocking ICT potential in Africa...

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