



## SG's Speeches / Statements 2001

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1.	23 - 27 April 2001	Opening Ceremony of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ordinary session of the Administrative Council 2001 Meeting	Nairobi, Kenya

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY GENERAL OF ATU, MR. JAN MUTAI AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE

COUNCIL 2001 MEETING, NAIROBI, KENYA, 23 – 27 APRIL 2001

- ◆ Our Guest of Honour (GOH), Hon. Musalia Mudavadi, EGH, MP, Minister for Information, Transport and Communications;
- ◆ Your Excellencies the Ambassadors and High Commissioners;
- ◆ Chairman of Administrative Council, Mr. Gendy MOUSA;
- ◆ Director General Communication Commission of Kenya, Mr. Samuel Chepkong'a;
- ◆ The Chief Executive Officers of Telkom, Safaricom and Kencell, M/S Cheserem, Joseph and Vandembrouck respectively;
- ◆ The Chief Executive Officer of African Connection Centre, Mrs. Mavis Sintim-Misa;
- ◆ Other Chief Executive Officers present;
- ◆ Distinguished Representatives of OAU, COMESA, ITU, CEPT, RASCOM and AFRALTI;
- ◆ Distinguished Delegates and Observers;
- ◆ Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is indeed an honour and a privilege for me to welcome you to the Opening Ceremony of this 2<sup>nd</sup> Ordinary Session of ATU Administrative Council 2001. We are delighted, that you have all found time to be with us in this beautiful city of Nairobi, the Capital of Kenya, land of opportunity. To visitors to this country, it is a special word 'Karibu' or welcome to You. We hope you will all feel at home among your sisters and brothers in the continent and the world.

Our GOH, Sir, May I express a special note of appreciation to you, for finding time, from your very busy schedule, in the Ministry and especially in Parliament, to officiate at this opening session of Council. Through you, Sir, May I also extend the Union's gratitude to the Government and People of the Republic of Kenya, for the timely, sustained and unflinching support it has received since the General Secretariat temporarily relocated to Nairobi in 1997. The support given is indeed ample illustration of Kenya's commitment to the cause of regional co-operation and economic integration.

GOH, Sir, the sponsors of some of our functions deserve a special mention. We are truly grateful to the MD of Telkom Kenya, Mr. Augustine Cheserem and his team for providing transport and communication help. In addition they will be hosting the first day dinner in honour of the Delegates and Observers to this Council meeting. In the same manner, we extend our sincere thanks to the MDs of Kencell and Safaricom, Mr. Philippe Vandembrouck and Mr. Michael Joseph respectively for sponsoring cocktails and dinners for participants in following evenings. Communication Commission of Kenya (CCK), the chief host of ATU Secretariat in Nairobi, have pitched-in to sponsor a dinner for participants too. For this very kind gesture, we offer our message of appreciation to the Director General of CCK, Mr. Samuel Chepkong'a and his team.

Our GOH, we are introducing a number of innovations at this session of Council. First, we shall this evening, take time to recognise the meritorious contributions by Administrations of Member States, and the Restructuring Project Team that drew up strategy for transforming the old PATU into a new ATU. As ATU grows into a leading ICT development agency, in Africa, it is doing so in the basis of a new strong foundation laid by the few solution providers in the continent. It is our firm belief that by recognising achievers, we shall be expanding the pool of such people towards reaching the critical mass, that will enable the economic take-off of Africa. The youth of this continent need to see that Africans are taking initiatives for tackling their own problems in unique ways, and further that the spirit of 'African Renaissance' has taken root. Secondly, we shall mark a milestone on the Union's journey towards being a knowledge centred organisation by launching the ATU Continental Directory.

This event crowns previous launches of ATU Website and the ATU Newsletter. The website is already attracting visitors in their thousands whilst the ATU Newsletter has been well received by our regional and global stakeholders. As we launch the 2001 edition of the ATU Continental Directory we give assurance that we shall produce annual editions of the same from now onwards. We shall be targeting these publications to investors, both domestic and foreign, and also to people interested in building partnerships; alliances and fruitful relationships in the continent. It is a unique contact base to Policy-Makers, Administrators, Regulators and Operators in Africa. The Secretariat will provide copies to interested parties at cost of production and delivery.

Thirdly, we shall focus on first day of Council on regional and global trends and issues that create the context within which we operate. The reforms at OAU and at ITU are part and parcel of essential working premises on which to build our future strategies. The practical experiences and view-points of promoters of ICT Connectivity namely RASCOM, COMTEL and African Connection Centre are equally relevant. With globalisation brought about by market liberalisation, privatisation and technology convergence, sharing perspectives on global partnership possibilities with other Regional Organisation is important. Today, we shall be exchanging views with a representative from the Council of European Post and Telecommunications (CEPT). We are very grateful to the CEOs of these organisations for availing us such a distinguished panel of experts; Mr. Koram from OAU; Mr. Sanou from ITU; Mr. Smaaland from CEPT; Mrs. Mavis Sintim-Misa from African Connection Centre; Mr. Adam from RASCOM and Dr. Dafalla from COMTEL. To all these experts, we extend a warm welcome, please feel at home, we look forward to learning from you.

GOH, Councillors, when we move on to transact our business, as provided in the Constitution and Convention of the Union, we shall take time to reflect on the achievements and challenges of the last financial year. We shall learn that the Union has made great strides in highlighting the investment opportunities in the continent and further that encouraging flows of capital especially into the Mobile, Internet and fibre-optic sectors are building up rapidly. More and more countries in Africa are stimulating this trend by inter-alia reforming their telecom sectors, establishing regulatory agencies and licensing private sector mobile operators. Joint ventures and strategic partnerships for privatisation of public telecom operators are becoming the norm methodologies for raising needed capital for extending ICT benefits to the people. Some of the ATU activities that contributed to emerging welcome trends in the continent include: -

- Launch of the African Connection Centre for Strategic Planning based in Midrand, South Africa in October 2000. It is headed by a dynamic, Harvard-educated lady, Mrs. Mavis Sintim-Misa who will be addressing participants later in the day.
- Participation of ATU Delegations at management team level in the World Telecommunications Standards Assembly, in Montreal, Canada, October 2000. Subsequently ATU Delegations were elected to management team positions, of important Study Groups including the one for the emerging third generation (3G/IMT 2000) mobile technologies.
- Organising a joint event with ITU, namely, Forum for African Telecommunications Regulators, at Gaborone, Botswana in October 2000.
- Launch of the consultative process for establishment of WATRA (West African Telecommunications Regulatory Association) at Abuja, Nigeria in September 2000.
- Launch of ATU Website, ATU Newsletter and ATU Continental Directory as discussed earlier on.

GOH, Councillors, challenges of bridging the digital divide nonetheless remain with us. In the next four days after the information session, Delegates will be examining new mechanisms for enhancing regional and global partnerships. They will also be reviewing strategies for strengthening the performance base of the Secretariat, and examining working methodologies for more effective participation in the global conferences for policy consensus, standards-setting and radiocommunication treaty-making. The overall thrust of the discussions will be creating consensus towards practical ways for raising investment, developing human resources and building an electronic platform for exchange of information, experience and best practice. Council will also be invited to launch the process for preparation of the next Strategic Plan for 2002-2006 period.

GOH, Sir, Excellencies, Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen, May I thank you for your kind attention. To the Speakers and Participants, may I wish you fruitful deliberations in the coming days.

Thank you very much.

**JKM/pzc – April 2001**