

Accounting • Payroll • Payments • ERP • CRM [Learn more](#)

[Recommend](#) [Share](#) [Tweet](#) [Share](#) [Partager](#)

MICROSOFT'S 4AFRIKA INITIATIVE CHANGING THE CONTINENT

By Wilhelmina Maboja
Last Updated: Friday, 18 October 2013 | 17:11 GMT

TV white spaces technology has become the Microsoft 4Afrika Initiative's key device in providing easy access to the internet to Africans.



"We wanted to explore new ways of linking the growth of our business to initiatives that spur economic development for the continent," Microsoft's Africa Initiatives general manager Fernando de Sousa told ABN Digital.

"We recognise Africa's potential for global impact and have developed the 4Afrika Initiative as a way to accelerate growth, entrepreneurship, skills and access for Africa and for Africans, so Africa can own its potential and grow its influence on the global stage."

The Microsoft 4Afrika initiative, which was launched in February 2013, aims to create a means through which Microsoft can actively engage in Africa's economic development to improve its global competitiveness.

According to the World Economic Forum's 2013 Global Competitiveness Report, a vast majority of the Africa's countries fall into the group of least competitive economies.

Countries in sub-Saharan Africa have nonetheless registering growth rates of over 5 per cent in the past two years, and the region continues to exceed the global average as well as exhibiting a favourable economic outlook.

Despite the low competitive ranking, de Sousa explained that Africa's development was more a compelling story than that of other emerging market regions in the world.

"Africa is home to more than one billion people. It houses 16 of the world's 30 fastest growing economies. Roughly 14% of the population is under the age of 15 and roughly 90% of the phones sold in Africa are still feature phones," de Sousa explained.

"We believe there is no better time to invest in Africa and the African people."

The Mawingu project in Kenya was the 4Afrika Initiative's first project, a tv white spaces technology implement that was designed to deliver low-cost, high-speed and wireless broadband. New opportunities for commerce, education, healthcare and delivery of government services across Kenya would also form part of the project.

The term white spaces refers to television frequencies in the very high frequency (VHF)

MORE FROM TECHNOLOGY

- > Tigo expands its fibre infrastructure to support b..
- > Cell C's Knott-Craig steps down
- > NASA space challenge comes to Nigeria
- > Mauritius best run economy aided by ICTs
- > Facebook to be made free on all mobile networks.
- > Vodacom and MTN buy out Nashua mobile subscri.
- > City of Cape Town on road to broadband connecti.
- > Think before you tweet
- > Nashua Mobile sells its Vodacom and MTN subsc.
- > MTN, Bharti Airtel to collaborate in remittance par.

Recommendations

- [Sign Up](#) Create an account or [Log In](#) to see what you
- Murphy taking stakes in Namibia offshore proj**
One person recommends this.
 - Safaricom FY total revenue up 16%**
One person recommends this.
 - Kenya tourism sector contributes 11% to GDP**
3 people recommend this.

Facebook social plugin

MOST COMMENTED

The world reacts to Sanusi's suspension
Thu, 20 Feb 2014 11:21:13 GMT
Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan suspended respected central bank governor Lamido Sanusi on Thursday. [read more](#)



CNBC Africa Live
Tue, 13 Nov 2012 17:36:58 GMT
[read more](#)

and ultra-high frequency (UHF) television broadcast bands that are either unassigned or unused by existing broadcasters.

"Television broadcasts occupy designated channels in the VHF and UHF bands, with the assignment of channels to broadcasts varying by location. Not all these designated channels are being used for broadcast, giving rise to 'white spaces' – where a channel that is not being used may be available for other purposes, such as connectivity and internet access," said de Sousa.

Microsoft partnered with Kenya's Ministry of Information and Communications and Kenyan internet service provider Indigo Telecom to deliver low-cost, high-speed wireless broadband to 6,000 people in rural areas near Nanyuki and Kalema.

Schools, healthcare clinics, government offices, and community centres now also have access to the internet through the project's installation, which has coverage of approximately 6,000 km squared.

Internet access is still significantly expensive in some African countries due to spectrum allocation and its licensing.

In South Africa, a number of internet service providers and cell phone network operators are putting increasing pressure on the country's Department of Communication to increase spectrum allocation to make broadband services more available in the country. Additional spectrum allocation will also allow for high-speed internet.

The current amount of spectrum allocated to mobile services in South Africa is among the lowest in the world. In developed markets, spectrum allocation to mobile services alone is at roughly 500 megahertz or more.

In the continent, mobile services for different countries can be allocated as little as 80 megahertz, yet mobile internet traffic levels in Africa is among the highest in the world.

"The kind of spectrum access that we are highlighting in these TV white spaces pilots is more like Wi-Fi, in that the base stations and customer devices can dynamically create broadband connections with unused UHF band spectrum. So this does not require the regulator to reallocate spectrum," de Sousa explained.

If white spaces technology is adopted, regulators will have to permit a new class of devices that give access to TV white spaces without the need for a license. TV white spaces devices will also have to be regulated in order to prevent interfering with already existing broadcasters and broadcast bands.

Apart from broadband access, the 4Afrika initiative has also set up programmes to reduce unemployment among young Africans such as the Microsoft's Student2Business programme.

The programme assists students and graduates in the job application process and creates a portal for employers to find young qualified professionals. A Microsoft 4Afrika Scholarship Programme was also recently launched in early August.

"A lot of organisations view China or the BRICs as the next big opportunity for growth, but we see the African continent as a game-changer in the global economy. We've recognised a lot of talent and innovation on the continent, and we want to ignite it," said de Sousa.



The aftermath of Sanusi's suspension

Fri, 21 Feb 2014 09:23:14 GMT

After the suspension of Sanusi Lamido Sanusi yesterday, there is much uncertainty about the future of the Nigerian financial markets. [read more](#)



Understanding Woolworths' dramatic exit from Nigeria

Wed, 13 Nov 2013 13:13:27 GMT

Last week, Woolworths announced that it was pulling out of Nigeria blaming high rental rates, supply chain and marketing challenges. [read more](#)



S.African miners' highest cases of TB in world

Thu, 27 Mar 2014 13:24:39 GMT

Mine workers in South Africa have the highest incidence of tuberculosis among all working populations in the world. [read more](#)

Recommend Share {0} Tweet {2} Share Partager {0}

Tags: africa, broadband, spectrum allocation, internet access, Tv white spaces, Microsoft 4Afrika initiative,

Comments

0 Comments

CNBC Africa

Sort by Best



Start the discussion...

Be the first to comment.

Subscribe

Add Disqus to your site

NEWS

- Southern Africa
- Western Africa
- East Africa
- Financial
- Industrials
- Mining
- Resources
- Technology
- IPO
- Special Reports

VIDEO

- Southern Africa
- West Africa
- East Africa
- Analyst-interviews
- Real Estate and Infrastructure
- Entrepreneurs and Technology
- Earnings Central
- Inflation Interest Rates and Economics
- Currencies and Commodities
- Bank Crossings
- CEO Interviews
- Magazines and Special Interest

MARKETS

- SA
- Nigeria
- Kenya
- Stocks
- Currencies
- Commodities
- Earnings

TOOLS

- Stock Screener

EVENTS

WATCH LIVE



SITE MAP

CONTACT

ADVERTISE

CONTRIBUTORS

BOOKMARK

GOOGLE+