NEW YORK, Sept. 30, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- Reportlinker.com announces that a new market research report is available in its catalogue:

Africa - Mobile Voice Market and Major Network Operators http://www.reportlinker.com/p0184366/Africa---Mobile-Voice-Market-and-Major-Network-Operators.html#utm_source=prnewswire&utm_medium=pr&utm_campaign=Wireless_Technology

Market penetration to reach 60% among Africas one billion people in 2012

Mobile phones represent more than 90% of all telephone lines in Africa. Market penetration passed the 50% mark in 2010 and is expected to reach 60% in 2012. Subscriber growth across the continent has slowed to around 17% p.a, but several individual markets are still growing at 50% p.a. or more and others stand at only single-digit penetration rates. The continent's most advanced markets have passed the 100% penetration mark.

Although the greatest demand is in the major cities, cellular solutions are also being employed to increase accessibility in rural and other disadvantaged areas. In addition to mobile networks, Wireless Local Loop (WLL) systems have been introduced in a large number of countries for the provision of fixed-wireless services, with CDMA-2000 1x having evolved as a preferred technology. Additional choices are available through satellite-based mobile services such as Globalstar, ICO, Iridium and Thuraya.

The introduction of prepaid services and a steady decline in tariffs has meant that more than half of Africa's one billion people can now afford a mobile phone. However, as lower income groups are being targeted, the declining Average Revenue per User (ARPU) is putting pressure on the network operators profit margins. Literal price wars have broken out in some markets where a large number of operators have been licensed. Despite this, international investors are still very keen to enter the market through new mobile licences or shares in existing mobile operations in Africa.

With their superior national coverage and large subscriber bases, Africa's mobile network operators have built up a level of market power to the extent that they have been called the new incumbents. Newly introduced converged licensing regimes have increased the competitive pressure but also allow the mobile operators to branch out into new service segments.

A variety of companies have established themselves as regional major players in Africa's mobile sector. France Telecom, through its Orange mobile division has established a presence in 18 African countries, South Africa's MTN in 16, in addition to several in the Middle East. India's Bharti Airtel took over 15 of the 16 African operations of Kuwait's Zain for US$10.7 billion and is now operating in a total of 17 African countries.

MTN's archrival in its South African home market, Vodacom's expansion across the continent has been limited to a total of only five countries due to restrictions from the partnership agreement with its majority shareholder, Vodafone which itself operates in three countries.

Millicom from Luxembourg was also among the early investors and is now operating under the Tigo brand in seven African countries.

Orascom from Egypt divested most of its sub-Saharan operations between 2002 and 2005, mostly in markets with low penetration and high growth potential, to concentrate on the more developed North African and Middle Eastern markets. However, in 2008 it established a new subsidiary Telecel Globe to re-enter sub-Saharan Africa, including some of the same markets it had abandoned five years earlier.

Other regional players with major funding from the Middle East include the UAE's Etisalat under the Moov brand, Warid Telecom, and the Lebanon -based Comium Group. Other African companies that have expanded beyond their home markets include Zimbabwe's Econet, Maroc Telecom (with backing from Vivendi of France), Libya's LapGreen and Sudan's Sudatel under the Expresso brand.

Further consolidation is expected as smaller players are finding it increasingly difficult to compete. But even the bigger pan-African operators have become potential takeover targets for even bigger global players.

Market highlights:

Mobile market penetration in Africa to reach 60% in 2012;

Unsustainable price wars are raging in some countries;

Mobile ARPU has bottomed in some markets but is still falling rapidly in others;

Some mobile operators are rolling out national fibre optic backbone networks and are entering new service sectors under converged licensing regimes;

Subscriber statistics and estimates for 2012 for each country;

Mergers and acquisitions (M&A) are expected to intensify in an increasingly crowded market.

Top 10 African countries by annual growth - mid-2011Country | Annual growth Ethiopia | 116%
Mali | 62%
Djibouti
| 60%
Burundi
| 58% Comoros Islands | 58%
Mayotte
| 51%
Burkina Faso
| 49%
Somalia
| 48%
Equatorial Guinea
| 45%
Zimbabwe
| 43% (Source: BuddeComm based on various sources)

Djibouti
2000 - 2012Table 36 Mobile subscribers and penetration in
Egypt
2000 - 2012Table 37 Mobinil active subscribers in
Egypt
2000 - 2011Table 38 Mobinil financial results in
Egypt
2002 - 2011Table 39 Mobinil blended monthly ARPU in
Egypt
2002 - 2011Table 40 Vodafone Egypt subscribers 2000 - 2011Table 41 Vodafone Egypt blended monthly ARPU 2003 - 2011Table 42 Forecast mobile subscribers in
Egypt
2013; 2016Table 43 Mobile subscribers and penetration in
Eritrea
2004 - 2012Table 44 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Ethiopia
1999 - 2012Table 45 Forecast mobile subscribers in
Ethiopia
2013; 2016Table 46 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Gabon
1999 - 2012Table 47 Zain Gabon subscribers and ARPU 2002 - 2009Table 48 Libertis subscribers and ARPU in
Gabon
2007 - 2011Table 49 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Gambia
1999 - 2012Table 50 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Ghana
1999 - 2012Table 51 Mobile subscribers by operator and annual change in
Ghana
May 2010Table 52 MTN Ghana ARPU 2002 - 2010Table 53 MTN Ghana 3G mobile broadband pricing August 2010Table 54 Vodafone Ghana 3G mobile broadband prepaid pricing August 2010Table 55 Vodafone Ghana 3G mobile broadband postpaid pricing August 2010Table 56 Forecast mobile subscribers in
Ghana
2013; 2016Table 57 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate 1999 - 2012Table 58 MTN Guinea subscribers and ARPU 2006 - 2010Table 59 Orange Guinea subscribers 2007 - 2011Table 60 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Kenya
1999 - 2012Table 61 Mobile subscribers by operator and quarterly change in
Kenya
September 2011Table 62 Safaricom ARPU in
Kenya
2007 - 2011Table 63 Zain Kenya ARPU 2006 - 2009Table 64 Forecast mobile subscribers in
Kenya
2013; 2016Table 65 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Lesotho

1997 - 2012Table 66 Vodacom Lesotho subscribers, ARPU and churn rate 2002 - 2011Table 67 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Liberia
2001 - 2012Table 68 LoneStar/MTN Liberia subscribers, ARPU and market share 2003 - 2011Table 69 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Libya
1998 - 2012Table 70 Mobile subscribers by operator, technology, and annual change in
Libya
March 2010Table 71 Libyana 3G/HSDPA broadband pricing July 2010Table 72 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Madagascar
2000 - 2012Table 73 Zain Madagascar financial data before takeover 2006 - 2009Table 74 Orange Madagascar subscribers 2007 - 2011Table 75 Forecast mobile subscribers 2013; 2016Table 76 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Malawi
1999 - 2012Table 77 TNM ARPU in
Malawi
2003 - 2009Table 78 Forecast mobile subscribers in
Malawi
2013; 2016Table 79 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Mali
2000 - 2012Table 80 Mobile operators, subscribers and annual change in
Mali June
2011Table 81 Malitel subscribers and ARPU 2008 - 2011Table 82 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Mauritius
1995 - 2012Table 83 Forecast mobile subscribers in
Mauritius
2013; 2016Table 84 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Morocco
2000 - 2012Table 85 Mobile subscribers by operator, technology and annual change in
Morocco
September 2011Table 86 Maroc Telecom domestic mobile subscribers and market share in
Morocco
2002 - 2011Table 87 Maroc Telecom domestic blended monthly mobile ARPU and churn rate in

Morocco
2003 - 2011Table 88 Maroc Telecom domestic mobile revenue and EBIT in
Morocco
2005 - 2011Table 89 Meditel mobile subscribers and market share in
Morocco
2002 - 2011Table 90 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Mozambique
1997 - 2012Table 91 Mobile subscribers by operator and annual change in
Mozambique
September 2010Table 92 Vodacom Mozambique financial results 2007 - 2010Table 93 mCel

119 Vodacom South Africa key statistics year ended March 2011Table 120 MTN South Africa subscribers and market share 2002 - 2011Table 121 MTN South Africa key statistics six months ended June 2011Table 122 Vodacom broadband subscribers in
South Africa
2006 - 2011Table 123 Telkom SA mobile subscribers 2009 - 2011Table 124 Forecast mobile subscribers in
South Africa
2013; 2016Table 125 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Sudan
1996 - 2012Table 126 Major mobile operators, subscribers and annual change in
Sudan
March 2010Table 127 Zain Sudan ARPU 2003 - 2010Table 128 MTN Sudan ARPU 2006 - 2010Table 129 Zain Sudan 3G/HSDPA pricing July 2010Table 130 Zain Sudan 3G/HSDPA corporate pricing July 2010Table 131 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Swaziland
1999 - 2012Table 132 Swazi MTN messaging prices in
Swaziland
2009; 2010Table 133 Swazi MTN ARPU in
Swaziland
2001 - 2011Table 134 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Tanzania
1999 - 2012Table 135 Mobile subscribers by operator and annual change in
Tanzania
September 2011Table 136 Vodacom Tanzania ARPU 2003 - 2011Table 137 Zain Tanzania ARPU 2002 - 2009Table 138 Forecast mobile subscribers in
Tanzania
2013; 2016Table 139 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Tunisia
1995 - 2012Table 140 Mobile subscribers by operator, technology and annual change in
Tunisia
September 2011Table 141 Tunisiana subscribers and blended monthly ARPU 2002 - 2011Table 142 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Uganda
1996 - 2012Table 143 MTN Uganda subscribers 2000 - 2011Table 144 MTN Uganda ARPU 2002 - 2011Table 145 Zain Uganda subscribers 2002 - 2009Table 146 Zain Uganda ARPU 2006 - 2009Table 147 Forecast mobile subscribers in
Uganda
2013; 2016Table 148 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Zambia
1995 - 2012Table 149 Mobile ARPU in
Zambia
Zain and MTN 2005 - 2009/10Table 150 Forecast mobile subscribers in
Zambia
2013; 2016Table 151 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Zimbabwe
1999 - 2012Table 152 Mobile operators, subscribers and annual change in

Zimbabwe
March 2010Chart 1 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Algeria
2002 - 2012Chart 2 Mobile operators by market share in
Algeria
September 2010Chart 3 Mobile subscribers in
Angola
2002 - 2012Chart 4 Mobile subscribers in
Botswana
2002 - 2012Chart 5 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Burkina Faso
2002 - 2012Chart 6 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Burundi
2002 - 2012Chart 7 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Cameroon
2002 - 2012Chart 8 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Chad
2002 - 2012Chart 9 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in Cote d Ivoire 2002 - 2012Chart 10 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in DRC 2002 - 2012Chart 11 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Djibouti
2002 - 2012Chart 12 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Egypt
2002 - 2012Chart 13 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Eritrea
2004 - 2012Chart 14 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Ethiopia
2002 - 2012Chart 15 Mobile subscribers in
Gabon
2002 - 2012Chart 16 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Gambia
2002 - 2012Chart 17 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate 2002 - 2012Chart 18 - Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Kenya
1999-2012Chart 19 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Lesotho
2002 - 2012Chart 20 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Liberia
2002 - 2012Chart 21 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Libya
2002 - 2012Chart 22 Mobile subscribers in
Madagascar
2002 - 2012Chart 23 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Malawi
2002 - 2012Chart 24 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Mali

2002 - 2012Chart 25 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Mauritius
2002 - 2012Chart 26 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Morocco
2002 - 2012Chart 27 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Mozambique
2002 - 2012Chart 28 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Namibia
2002 - 2012Chart 29 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Nigeria
2002 - 2012Chart 30 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Rwanda
2002 - 2012Chart 31 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Senegal
2002 - 2012Chart 32 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Sierra Leone
2002 - 2012Chart 33 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
South Africa
2002 - 2012Chart 34 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Sudan
2002 - 2012Chart 35 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Swaziland
2002 - 2012Chart 36 Mobile subscribers in
Tanzania
2002 - 2012Chart 37 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Tunisia
2002 - 2012Chart 38 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Uganda
2002 - 2012Chart 39 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Zambia
2002 - 2012Chart 40 Mobile subscribers and penetration rate in
Zimbabwe
2002 - 2012Exhibit 1 An analysis of
Egypt's
third mobile licence valuationExhibit 2 Vodafone Egypt's public listing and delistingExhibit 3 Emergency rescue scheme for Lake Victoria in
Kenya
,
Tanzania
and UgandaExhibit 4 Nigerian Ownership battle from EWN to Vee Networks to V-Mobile to Celtel/Zain to BhartiExhibit 5 e-Soko in RwandaExhibit 6 Spotlight on Vodacom GSM community payphones in South AfricaExhibit 7 Map of SudanExhibit 8 Swazi MTN licence conditions in SwazilandExhibit 9 Vodacom in and out and back in ZambiaExhibit 10
One million dollars
per minute in
Zimbabwe

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