

Connecting to the world

By **MOHAMED ASSOWEH BOUH**

CEO, DJIBOUTI TELECOM



MOHAMED ASSOWEH BOUH has worked at Djibouti Telecom since 1995, occupying a range of posts, during which time he has overseen the roll out of the company's internet strategy, as well as linking the country with the global telecommunications community via several undersea cables. He has also played a key role in providing telecommunication services to rural areas. Before taking over as CEO, he was Director of Mobile Networks, and then Technical Advisor to the former Director General.

Most people would find it difficult to locate Djibouti on a world map, perhaps even unaware of its location in East Africa. Bearing this in mind, one of Djibouti Telecom's objectives has been to shed greater international light on our country, thanks to which, today its role in connecting continents is fully acknowledged.

We have built on our privileged geographical position at the crossroads of Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Europe by investing in international infrastructure that has allowed us to develop a fully resilient international data network. As a result of this investment process, the Republic of Djibouti has one of Africa's most advanced international telecommunications networks, providing it with the strongest presence in the East African region. Since its creation in 1999, Djibouti Telecom has committed itself to becoming a regional hub, and today our company is able to deliver a complete portfolio of voice, data/IP and capacity

services over state of the art networks.

To date, Djibouti Telecom has a landing facility serving five submarine cables, namely Sea Me We 3, EIG (Europe India Gateway), EASSY (East Africa Submarine System), SEACOM and the Aden-Djibouti cable. In addition, we have two upcoming transcontinental cables: AAE1 (Asia-Africa-Europe 1) and SEA-ME-WE 5 (it will connect Singapore to France, and Djibouti will be one of the 17 landing points). Moreover, Djibouti Telecom Teleport provides both IP connectivity, as well as backhaul services, thanks to its location on DT's fiber network.

As the leading operator on submarine cable diversity in the region, our next step has been to foster partnerships with regional and international companies and to provide a diverse range of wholesale services such as bandwidth over submarine cables, data and IP transit through Telecom Italia Sparkle, LEVEL 3, and Saudi Telecom IP Point of Presence (POP) in Djibouti, where in 2013, Djibouti Telecom set up a Data Centre, a tier-three level facility providing collocation facilities for telecommunications carriers.

Djibouti Telecom's ambition is to serve as a unique gateway to millions of customers in the nations of East Africa, and that goal is within reach today given their fast growing needs for international bandwidth.

At the sub regional level, Djibouti is connected to Ethiopia through two terrestrial cables, while four operators from Somalia are connected to Djibouti via microwave and optical fiber cable. There are also ongoing discussions with South Sudan relating to the provision of IP services through Djibouti teleports.

The future challenge for our company will be to meet the needs of the regional market while providing premium quality services in terms of availability, quality and costs. But we are convinced that our strategic investment and partnership fostering policy will enable us to remain the key connectivity hub of the African continent.

From a national perspective, Djibouti Telecom is the sole operator for fixed services (including corporate and wholesale IP/data and ADSL), mobile (2, 2.5, 3G) and internet services. Today broadband services are essential to the development of business, education, health services and e-government, and Djibouti Telecom is committed to fully play its role despite the limitations of the domestic market.



Five submarine cable systems converge on Djibouti