



Airtel Africa plc

(‘Airtel Africa’, or the ‘Group’)

Airtel Africa becomes the first operator in Africa to commercially launch Starlink Mobile in the DRC

Kinshasa, 17 August 2026: Airtel Africa and Starlink today have launched satellite-to-mobile service in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (the DRC), marking the first commercial deployment in Africa. The service enables Airtel customers with compatible smartphones to access connectivity in non-terrestrial areas wherever they can see the sky.

Starlink, the world’s largest satellite-to-mobile constellation with 650 launched satellites, enables light-data apps, including WhatsApp messaging as well as SMS. Customers do not require specialised equipment or a separate device to access the service.

The launch follows the strategic partnership announced by Airtel Africa and Starlink in December 2025 and the successful testing of Starlink Mobile data and messaging services in Kenya in March 2026. The DRC is the first Airtel Africa market – and the first country in Africa – where the service has progressed to commercial deployment.

To use the service, customers must have a compatible LTE Android smartphone, an active Airtel DRC data bundle or data roaming switched on. In the future, the service will also be supported on Apple devices.

Speaking on the launch, Airtel Africa’s CEO, Sunil Taldar, commented: “The first-ever commercial launch of Starlink Mobile in Africa is a significant milestone for Airtel Africa through our partnership with SpaceX. By combining Airtel’s terrestrial network with Starlink’s satellite technology, we are extending essential connectivity beyond the limits of mobile infrastructure. The DRC is leading this important development, and the experience gained here will support the progressive expansion of the service across our markets, subject to country-specific regulatory approvals. I must specially acknowledge the invaluable support of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo through the Honourable Minister of Posts, Telecommunications and New ICT and the President of Regulatory Authority and their teams.”

Airtel DRC managing director, Theirry Diasnoma, said: “The commercial launch of Starlink Mobile is an important step in extending essential connectivity across the DRC. Our country’s size and geography mean that many people live, work and travel beyond the reach of conventional mobile infrastructure. This service provides an additional layer of connectivity, helping customers remain reachable, informed and connected even in areas where terrestrial coverage is unavailable.”

The service is expected to be particularly valuable to people and organisations operating in remote areas, including transport and logistics operators, humanitarian organisations, health workers, farmers, mining operations and communities beyond the reach of existing terrestrial networks. It will also support access to essential communications during emergencies, natural disasters and temporary terrestrial network disruptions.

Eligible customers can register through the MyAirtel app to receive free trial access to the service for an introductory 30-day period. Customers travelling to the DRC and joining Airtel DRC can also register for the trial after activating an eligible service and downloading the MyAirtel app.

Following the introductory period, customers will continue accessing Starlink Mobile through eligible Airtel data bundles.

Airtel Africa and Starlink continue developing the service, with additional capabilities expected to be introduced as the technology evolves and the necessary regulatory approvals are secured.

The launch further reinforces Airtel Africa’s position as a pioneering telecommunications operator with a strong record of bringing first-of-its-kind innovations to Africa and demonstrates

its continued focus on using technology to address the continent's connectivity and digital-security needs.

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About Airtel Africa

Airtel Africa is a leading provider of telecommunications and mobile money services, with operations in 14 countries across sub-Saharan Africa. Airtel Africa's integrated offer provides national and international mobile voice and data services as well as mobile money services to over 183.5 million customers. The company's strategy is focused on delivering a great customer experience across the entire footprint and increasing digital and financial inclusion to transform lives across Africa, in line with our corporate purpose.

For more information, please www.airtel.africa or connect with us on [LinkedIn](#).