

**Airtel Africa plc**

(‘Airtel Africa’, or the ‘Group’)

**Airtel Africa and SpaceX announce strategic partnership to launch Starlink Direct-to-Cell connectivity across Africa**

**This marks the first satellite-to-mobile service for millions of people in Africa.**

**Dubai, 16 December 2025:** Airtel Africa today announced an agreement with SpaceX to introduce Starlink Direct-to-Cell satellite connectivity across all its 14 markets that serve 173.8 million customers. Through this partnership, Airtel Africa customers with compatible smartphones in regions without terrestrial coverage can have network connectivity through Starlink, which is the world’s largest 4G connectivity provider (by geographic reach).

The satellite-to-mobile service will begin in 2026 with data for select applications and text messaging. This agreement also includes support for Starlink’s first broadband Direct-to-Cell system, with next-generation satellites that will be capable of providing high-speed connectivity to smartphones with 20x improved data speed. The rollout will proceed in line with country-specific regulatory approvals.

Airtel Africa is the first mobile network operator in Africa to offer Starlink Direct-to-Cell service, powered by 650 satellites to provide seamless connectivity to its customers in remote areas. The partnership reinforces Airtel Africa’s commitment to bridge digital divide and offer seamless connectivity to its customers. Airtel Africa and Starlink will continue to explore additional collaboration opportunities to further advance digital inclusion across the continent.

**Airtel Africa MD and chief executive officer Sunil Taldar said:** “Airtel Africa remains committed to delivering great experience to our customers by improving access to reliable and contiguous mobile connectivity solutions. Starlink’s Direct-to-Cell technology complements the terrestrial infrastructure and even reaches areas where deploying terrestrial network solutions are challenging. We are very excited about the collaboration with Starlink, which will establish a new standard for service availability across all our 14 markets.”

**Starlink Vice President of Sales, Stephanie Bednarek said:** “For the first time, people across Africa will stay connected in remote areas where terrestrial coverage cannot reach, and we’re so thrilled that Starlink Direct-to-Cell can power this life-changing service. Through this agreement with Airtel Africa, we’ll also deliver our next-generation technology to offer high-speed broadband connectivity, which will offer faster access to many essential services.”

**-ENDS-**

**Enquiries**

**Airtel Africa**

Emeka Oparah

Vice-President Communications & CSR

[Emeka.oparah@africa.airtel.com](mailto:Emeka.oparah@africa.airtel.com)

**Hudson Sandler**

Cosmas Butunyi, Eugene Ng’ang’a

[airtelafrika@hudsonsandler.com](mailto:airtelafrika@hudsonsandler.com)

### **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 174 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](http://www.airtel.africa) or connect with us on [LinkedIn](#).

### **About Starlink Direct-to-Cell**

Starlink Direct to Cell is the world's only and largest constellation with more than 650 satellites in low-Earth orbit that delivers data, voice, video and messaging to devices in mobile dead zones. Connecting more than 11M customers across five continents and counting, Direct-to-Cell satellites work with existing LTE phones wherever you can see the sky. Acting like a cell phone tower in space with the most advanced phased array antennas in the world that connect seamlessly across the Starlink network over lasers to any point in the globe, it enables network integration similar to a standard roaming partner. Starlink is the world's largest 4G coverage provider and partners with Mobile Network Operators all over the world.

Learn more [here](#) and follow [@Starlink on X](#).