

Airtel Africa partners with UN Women

Women farmers in the East and Horn of Africa region are poised to benefit from practical information-sharing tools via Airtel's mobile networks. This follows a memorandum of understanding signed between the UN Women (The United Nations entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women) and Airtel Africa.



As per the MoU (memorandum of understanding), UN Women will identify the farmers to be covered under this initiative, whilst Airtel will package and deliver the appropriate mobile solutions to support their livelihoods and enhance their efficiency.

Commenting on the partnership, Andre Beyers, chief marketing officer of Airtel Africa said, "The empowerment of women is essential to economic development, especially in rural and agricultural economies. We are pleased to partner with UN Women and contribute to their agenda of gender equality and empowerment of women by leveraging the possibilities mobile telephony has to offer."

Accessing real time information

Under the agreement, Airtel Africa will establish a Farmer's Information System, which will enable women farmers to access real time information related to weather, changes to the policy environment (such as taxation and regulation), available support services; as well as other areas. In addition, Airtel will also offer internet protocol messaging services and closed user groups.

Mobile connectivity gives rural communities access to education, banking facilities and opportunities to increase trade. By connecting rural communities through its mobile networks, Airtel aims to create positive community impact, greater social interaction and opportunities for economic development.

Christine Musisi, UN Women's regional programme director for the East and Horn of Africa, said "This exciting new partnership will use the power of mobile telecommunications to engage and empower women in rural and urban areas.

Working with Airtel, UN Women can reach entrepreneurs faster, through communications platforms as they already own mobile phones. Increasingly, both the public and private sectors recognise that empowering women is smart economics, and that women must be brought to the heart of Africa's development. We will work closely with Airtel to train women so that they, their families, and the region can reap the benefits of this opportunity."

Women empowerment

The two-year partnership between Airtel and UN Women aims at building the skills, capabilities and resources of women entrepreneurs. Women provide approximately 70% of agricultural labour and produce 90% of all food, yet do not always share equally in the economic benefits of the industry. Airtel and UN Women are dedicated to helping women farmers enhance their productive capacity and international

competitiveness in the countries where they jointly operate.

Airtel believes that entrepreneurship and the development of the private sector are essential to achieving economic development and poverty eradication. Under this agreement, Airtel will also co-finance initiatives and projects promoting the empowerment of women and the girl child.

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