

Abstract: The Regulatory Challenges in Transitioning to IMT-2000

As technology for 3G matures and commercial operation becomes more prevalent in several countries, invariably its introduction in developing country markets and particularly in Africa is only a matter of time. And so the need for Regulators in Africa to prepare themselves becomes even more urgent. The solutions to the regulatory challenges that will need to be developed on the other hand are not necessarily replicable from those of developed nations for a variety of reasons. In most African markets where competition is yet to mature and probably competition laws are not even in place; infrastructure roll-out for national backbones is still the “the” major area of focus and so “technological neutrality” may not necessarily be ideal; affordability concerns imply that innovative solutions based on VOIP have to be treated with kid gloves; universal access requirements remain a primary concern in licensing ;and mobile phones have become the “preferred” mode of communications access for new customers vis a vis fixed lines; the regulatory challenges are clearly different from those of the developed nations. This presentation attempts to pose some of the regulatory challenges that may be faced by African regulators and suggests some possible approaches in tackling these challenges.