II–2.7 : The Republic of Niger has announced it will implement telecommunications regulatory systems following the model established by The Republic of Congo.

Thursday 14 October 2010, by Alex Raiffe, Junior Editor

MAIN INFORMATION

The Nigerien Minister for Communication, New Technologies, Information, and Culture, Mrs. Takoubakoye Amina Boureima, announced at the 3rd African Telecommunications Union plenipotentiary conference in Brazzaville, on September 26, 2010, that her country would implement a system for the regulation of international telecommunications similar to the Congolese system.

CONTEXT AND SUMMARY

As we have previously reported, The Republic of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville) implemented a telecommunications regulator, the *Autorité de Régulation des Postes et des Communications Electroniques* (ARPEC, the Congolese Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Agency) on November 25, 2010.[1]

This authority, directed by Mr. Yves Castanou, is in charge of regulating telecommunications in the Congo, attributing radio frequencies, and regulating the Congolese postal service.

It has, since its inception, spearheaded a new telephone numbering plan; revised the postal service's obligations and mission statement; and reworked the system of attribution of radio frequencies.

Its installation of a modern international inbound telecommunications management and supervision center, called an Interconnection Management System, constructed by Global Voice Group, impressed Nigerien Communications Minister, Mrs. Takoubakoye Amina Boureima, during her visit to Brazzaville for the 3rd African Telecommunications Union summit on September 26, 2010, reported Africa Time[2], in its September 28, 2010 edition.

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[1] *Cf. The Journal of Regulation, II-2.4.*

[2] http://www.africatime.com/Congo/nouvelle.asp?no_nouvelle=552737&no_categorie=

This surveillance system allows the regulatory authority to exactly calculate the amount of inbound traffic, thereby reducing fraud and improving tax collection by not having to rely on operators' declarations to calculate the amount of tax and fees due.

Indeed, according to Africa Time, the system has allowed the Congolese government to collect an extra 1.8 billion Francs CFA (2.75 million Euros, or 3.77 million US$) since its implementation in June 2009, shared between the Congolese state and the telecommunications infrastructure owner.

The Africa Time reports that Mrs. Takoubakoye Amina Boureima plans to implement a similar system in Niger, in order to profit from the benefits of the Congolese experience.

Indeed, Mrs. Takoubakoye Amina Boureima will implement the technological aspect of the Congo's telecommunications regulation, without mimicking its structure: whereas the Congo has a specialized agency for telecommunications regulation (the ARPEC), Niger has a Ministry of Communication, New Technologies, Information, and Culture, [3]and an independent *Autorité de Régulation Multisectorielle* (Multi-Sector Regulatory Authority)[4], which shares responsibility for telecommunications regulation, as well as regulating the transport, energy, and water sectors.

BRIEF COMMENTARY

The Congolese system of telecommunications supervision is an example of The Congo's will to modernize its telecommunications system.

Improved tax and revenue collection benefits both the infrastructure manager and the State, who are better able to make infrastructure improvements and modernization, essential to Africa's future economic development.

Indeed, the investment in inbound traffic supervision technology will allow African regulators to create a true competitive telecommunications market by developing and sustaining Information Technology corporations by generating revenue to implement investment projects in infrastructure and fledgling businesses.

We can only approve Niger's decision to follow the successful Congolese example of telecommunications traffic management.

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[3] http://www.gouv-niger.ne/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=64&Itemid=91

[4] www.arm-niger.org