**OPINION ARTICLE   
APPROVED FOR DISTRIBUTION ON 5 MAY 2025**

**Data Centre Neutrality – Hyperscalers and SEACOM as the Carrier of Carriers***By Giovanni Da Costa, Managing Director, SEACOM Digital Infrastructure South Africa*

**JOHANNESBURG – Network architecture requirements have shifted drastically over the last few years. As our reliance on always-on, always available connections has accelerated, so too has the need for data centre neutral carrier networks that make it possible to create global reach, ensure resilience and redundancy while ensuring seamless interconnectivity.**

Content providers, hyperscalers and over-the-top players are expanding at an unprecedented rate, pushing infrastructure limits to bring workloads closer to end users as they look to deliver vast amount of data traffic without compromising the user experience. However, scaling is not as simple as flipping a switch. Data centres are finite, and traditional models pose constraints. This is where data centre neutrality becomes critical, not just as a concept but as an operational reality enabled by carriers such as SEACOM.

A carrier-driven, data centre-neutral approach to digital infrastructure is a game-changer for Africa's digital future. SEACOM provides the essential connectivity backbone, allowing hyperscalers, OTTs (Over-the-Top services), and global network carriers to scale across multiple facilities without constraint. Our focus is on powering the infrastructure that enables digital services to reach the end-user (consumers) seamlessly.

**Africa's evolving infrastructure value chain**

Africa's digital ecosystem relies on high-capacity interconnectivity across multiple facilities. Hyperscalers and content providers must move workloads across regions without re-architecting networks or facing latency issues. SEACOM is pivotal as the carrier that connects other carriers – an invisible yet critical link in the digital economy. Whether it's a regional carrier in Botswana trying to access Microsoft's cloud infrastructure in South Africa or a new OTT entering a market like Uganda, SEACOM is the gateway.

Historically, data centre operators emphasised carrier neutrality, allowing businesses to choose from multiple network providers. However, today, true flexibility requires data centre neutrality – a model where no single data centre becomes a constraint, and carriers like SEACOM provide seamless interconnection between disparate facilities across the continent.

*Key trends shaping this shift include:*

* Multi-data centre strategies to enable flexible workload movement
* The emergence of new digital hubs in cities like Maputo, as well as regions such as Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda
* Infrastructure strategies focused on speed to market and hyperscaler
* A shift in the infrastructure value chain to a focus on resilience, redundancy and robustness

While challenges remain, such as reluctance from incumbents, infrastructure costs, and energy reliability, the direction is clear. Data centre neutrality is the future.

**SEACOM's distinct approach**

Unlike legacy infrastructure models, SEACOM's approach is anchored in speed, scale, and strategic market access. Our clients are asking, "How can we reach the market faster?" The opportunity cost of delay is too high – hyperscalers and content providers must move now, and we enable them to do so.

When capacity is constrained at one data centre, clients need the flexibility to shift workloads seamlessly to another. For example, if space is limited at DC1, clients can immediately pivot to DC2—because SEACOM connects both data centres, regardless of who owns them. While some networks are locked into specific facilities or regional monopolies, SEACOM's neutral infrastructure enables effortless movement between data centres. If there is no capacity at one facility, workloads can instantly switch to another because SEACOM connects them all.

SEACOM, as the *carrier of carriers*, provides the infrastructure that global carriers need to expand seamlessly across Africa. By leveraging major subsea cable systems like Equiano, WACS, and its own SEACOM cable, SEACOM ensures high-capacity connectivity between data centres and end users. Multiple entry points into data centres eliminate single points of failure, enhancing network resilience.

By removing the need for exclusivity agreements and unlocking cross-border capacity with pre-deployed connectivity, SEACOM allows hyperscalers and content providers to reach new markets quickly – delivering digital services directly to consumers and businesses alike with minimal friction. Deployment into emerging markets like Mozambique, Tanzania, and Malawi- often overlooked due to infrastructure constraints – becomes more effortless, allowing global providers to land, expand, and scale within weeks – not months.

**A 'Carrier of Carriers' for a better consumer experience**

Ultimately, the biggest winners are the end users. SEACOM helps reduce latency, improve reliability, and enhance the digital experience by bringing hyperscaler and content provider networks closer to end-users via multiple neutral data centres. Whether streaming Netflix, using Microsoft 365, or accessing Salesforce, users experience faster load times, fewer service interruptions, and smoother interactions. This model is not just about delivering data. It's about providing real-time value at the edge, closer to the user.

SEACOM's role as the *carrier of carriers* is to connect the dots across Africa, making it easier for hyperscalers, OTTs and global carriers to scale, reach users, and create inclusive digital ecosystems. By leveraging high-capacity fibre networks and strategic interconnections, SEACOM is driving Africa's next wave of digital transformation. In this ecosystem:

* Carriers enable interconnection.
* Hyperscalers drive digital expansion.
* SEACOM provides the backbone.

Africa's digital future depends on agile, scalable infrastructure and true data centre neutrality. SEACOM is making this a reality.

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**EDITORS' NOTES:**

**About SEACOM**

SEACOM is a diversified ICT provider of scale, offering a wide range of voice, managed networks, security, cloud, and server hosting solutions and services to businesses, network carriers, service providers and enterprises. SEACOM Digital Infrastructure owns and operates one of Africa's largest networks of ICT infrastructure, including multiple subsea cables, a resilient, continent-wide IP-MPLS Network, and Fibre networks in and across the continent. With a network spanning South Africa to Europe and Asia, SEACOM empowers African businesses to connect seamlessly and securely to global markets. Businesses partner with SEACOM's Digital Services for cybersecurity solutions, including firewalls, threat detection, cloud-based solutions and secure network infrastructure, to safeguard their digital assets.