**OPINION ARTICLE**

**THE SEACOM STORY:**

**Africa needs robust ICT infrastructure and reliable digital services to remain competitive in an increasingly complex global landscape**

By Alpheus Mangale, Group CEO of SEACOM

**Africa has long been dubbed the “Last Frontier”, a phrase that speaks both to its untapped potential and the immense opportunities it holds. Once overlooked and even referred to as the “Dark Continent”, Africa is now emerging as the next horizon for investment, growth and innovation. One thing is clear: Africa stands at a pivotal moment of economic promise and the world is taking notice.**

According to the African Development Bank, the continent’s growth is projected to rise from 3.4% in 2024 to 3.7% in 2025, and 4.0% in 2026 making it the second-fastest-growing region in the world after Asia at a time when average global growth stagnates around 1.0%. Supported by strong demographic fundamentals and steadily improving macroeconomic conditions, Africa is increasingly viewed as a destination for meaningful, long-term returns and investors are taking notice.

Yet this growth remains uneven. According to World Bank estimates, roughly 464 million people across the continent still live in extreme poverty. In many regions, economic opportunity remains out of reach with intra-African and international trade remaining significantly underdeveloped. Africa currently participates in just 3% of global goods exchanged.

To shift this status quo, the continent must capitalise on its greatest asset: its people; especially its young, digitally native population. By 2050, the continent is expected to be home to more than 30% of the world’s youth. This demographic surge presents enormous potential but only if the right enablers are put in place to unlock it. Technology is a powerful catalyst for inclusive, equitable growth, and Africa has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to leapfrog traditional development models through robust ICT infrastructure and digital innovation.

At SEACOM, we believe that digital connectivity is the key to unlocking Africa’s potential. As a leading pan-African ICT provider, we are committed to investing in the infrastructure, skills, and innovation ecosystems needed to drive inclusive digital transformation and position Africa to thrive in the global digital economy.

**SEACOM: Pioneering Africa’s Digital Evolution**

Founded in 2009, SEACOM was the first high-speed fibre operator to connect East Africa to the rest of the world, launching Africa’s first broadband submarine cable system along the continent’s Eastern and Southern coastlines. This bold move laid the foundation for faster, more reliable internet connectivity in a region that had long been neglected and underserved.

With deeply South African roots, SEACOM’s story is built on innovation, technical excellence, and a deep commitment to solving Africa’s ICT challenges. Driven by a passion for technology and client success, SEACOM has continually evolved to meet the continent’s changing digital needs.

Sixteen years on, SEACOM has transformed from a subsea cable operator into a leading pan-African provider of integrated digital services and solutions. Today, the company delivers enterprise-grade voice, managed networks, cloud services and cybersecurity solutions to a diverse client base including global hyperscalers, carriers, service providers, and enterprises across sectors such as finance, hospitality, and mining.

As a digital services aggregator, SEACOM acts as a one-stop shop for clients seeking scalable, future-ready ICT solutions. By integrating globally relevant technologies, the company enables businesses to operate more efficiently, optimise performance, and unlock new growth opportunities.

SEACOM believes that technology is a powerful catalyst for economic development. A robust and efficient digital infrastructure reduces transaction costs, boosts productivity, and promotes inclusivity by expanding access to opportunity.

In line with this belief, SEACOM is committed to investing in the future; expanding subsea cable routes, strengthening cross-border connectivity, and enhancing network security to meet growing data demands. These efforts are driven by rapid advancements in AI, location-based intelligence, and global collaboration which demand robust digital infrastructure that enables businesses to innovate and respond to accelerating market shifts.

As an African company, SEACOM understands the continent’s unique realities. Its infrastructure investments are designed not only to enable digital business but also to help Africa adapt, innovate, and compete in an increasingly digital global economy.

**SEACOM Digital Infrastructure: Powering Africa’s Digital Backbone**

SEACOM owns and operates one of the most extensive ICT infrastructure networks on the African continent including multiple subsea cables, a resilient, continent-wide IP-MPLS backbone, and terrestrial fibre systems across multiple regions. Its infrastructure portfolio supports a full range of services, including Carrier Ethernet, IP Transit, Dark Fibre, and Private Line solutions.

With over 4,000 clients across 17 countries, SEACOM plays a central role in enabling the digital ecosystems that drive Africa’s economic activity. Looking ahead, SEACOM is laying the groundwork for future technologies. While commercial 6G networks have yet to materialise, the company is actively investing in R&D, collaborating on standards development, and exploring forward-looking use cases to ensure its infrastructure is future-ready.

SEACOM also remains deeply committed to bridging Africa’s digital divide. Its infrastructure investments aim not only to enhance urban connectivity but also to extend affordable, high-speed internet access to underserved remote areas, addressing infrastructure gaps and creating more equitable digital participation across the continent.

For the last sixteen years, SEACOM has provided the digital highway that connects businesses to their markets, suppliers to their customers, and people to people. Clients and partners alike trust SEACOM to deliver outstanding quality of service and innovative solutions built on reliable infrastructure that underpins productivity, inclusion, and resilience in an increasingly interconnected world.

The transformative power of digital infrastructure is undisputed. When subsea cables like SEACOM first landed in South Africa, studies suggest they contributed to a GDP uplift of up to 6%. More broadly, the World Bank estimates that a 10% increase in broadband penetration in developing countries is associated with an average 1.4% increase in GDP growth, a powerful testament to the critical importance of digital infrastructure investment.

**Empowering Africa for a digitally connected future**

Just as physical infrastructure is vital to economic development, so too are digital services which play a critical role in driving innovation, enhancing productivity, creating new business opportunities, and improving access to information and services.

SEACOM delivers comprehensive, end-to-end digital ICT solutions and managed services capability designed to help enterprises accelerate their digital transformation journeys. SEACOM’s suite of Digital services spans across Cloud, Communication, Connectivity, Cyber Security and Smart Networking, all of which are built to enable businesses, educational institutions, and governments to digitise their operations efficiently and securely.

With capabilities spanning high-speed internet, hosting, managed services, and advanced security, SEACOM helps clients move beyond connectivity to realise the full value of digitalisation.

At the heart of SEACOM’s mission is a commitment to inclusive transformation. By delivering world-class infrastructure and integrated digital services, the company empowers both businesses and communities unlocking access, expanding participation, and enabling Africa’s digital economy to thrive.

SEACOM believes that the widespread adoption of digital services has the power to reshape society increasing access to knowledge, improving communication, and creating new pathways for economic advancement and value creation.

**Getting to grips with technology trends**

The pace of technological advancement today is unprecedented — reshaping industries, transforming everyday life, and challenging businesses to adapt in real time.

Emerging trends in digital services; from Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to IoT, blockchain, quantum computing and augmented reality offer exciting opportunities for innovation yet also introduce new vulnerabilities, particularly in the realm of cybersecurity. As digital ecosystems expand, so too does the risk of cyber threats, including phishing, malware, denial-of-service attacks, and insider breaches.

Staying ahead of these challenges requires more than awareness, it demands action. SEACOM takes a proactive approach to this evolving threat landscape, continuously monitoring developments and helping clients respond with agility and confidence.

Through its comprehensive suite of digital solutions, SEACOM empowers businesses to embrace transformation securely. Its offerings span end-to-end ICT services, high-speed connectivity, cloud infrastructure, and advanced cybersecurity capabilities, enabling enterprises, including e-commerce businesses, to operate efficiently, ensuring seamless transactions and secure data management.

By combining innovation with resilience, SEACOM ensures its clients are not only equipped to adopt the latest technologies but to do so safely and securely.

**Navigating risk with agility and resilience**

Beyond cyber threats, the ICT sector is increasingly exposed to geopolitical risks that could impact Africa’s digital ambitions. Political instability, regional conflicts, international trade tensions, and global regulatory shifts can all disrupt operations, hinder supply chains, and erode trust in cross-border technology solutions.

SEACOM recognises that effective risk management is essential to delivering reliable, uninterrupted digital services. The company adopts a client-first approach in both its decision-making and risk strategies ensuring that resilience is built into every layer of its operations.

To mitigate geopolitical and operational risks, SEACOM proactively monitors global developments and works closely with international partners investing in route diversity, redundancy, and alternative supply paths to reduce the risk of downtime and ensure service continuity.

SEACOM’s ownership structure also enables it to act with speed and precision. As a privately held company, it benefits from a streamlined governance model allowing accelerated decision making and agility. This enable swift responses to emerging threats and opportunities, ultimately benefitting its clients and stakeholders.

**The future is bright**

SEACOM firmly believes that Africa is on the cusp of a transformative era marked by economic expansion, innovation, and unlocking untapped developmental potential. At the heart of this transformation lies technology and digital infrastructure which, when fully leverage, can accelerate progress, create opportunity, and uplift communities at scale.

Africa’s future growth depends not just on access to technology, but on how effectively it is used to deliver meaningful impact. SEACOM maintains that ICT companies will ultimately be judged not by the volume of infrastructure deployed, but by the lives improved and businesses empowered through their solutions.

From the beginning, SEACOM’s mission has been clear: to provide the digital foundations that support Africa’s growth and development. Today, that commitment remains stronger than ever. By delivering world-class digital infrastructure and services tailored to the continent’s needs, SEACOM is helping Africa realise its full potential; building a connected, inclusive, and competitive digital future.

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