



Africell appoints renowned Africa expert to Board of Directors

Ambassador J. Peter Pham, distinguished fellow at the Atlantic Council and former senior US State Department official, will help Africell capitalize on growth opportunities in Africa

London – 7 June 2021 – Africell has announced the appointment of Ambassador J. Peter Pham to the Group’s Board of Directors. The appointment boosts Africell’s expansion strategy and reinforces the company’s status as the leading US-owned mobile network operator in Africa.

Ambassador Pham is a recognized global authority on Africa. In addition to being a non-executive director of Africell Group, he is a distinguished fellow at the Atlantic Council think tank, where prior to his recent government service he had been Director of the Africa Center and Vice President for Research and Regional Initiatives. Between 2018 – 2021, Ambassador Pham was a senior diplomat and policymaker at the US Department of State. He served first as US Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, encompassing Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Angola, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and Kenya; and then as US Special Envoy for the Sahel with the personal rank of Ambassador, responsible for a region encompassing not only Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, but also the West African coastal states from Senegal to Cameroon. In these roles, Ambassador Pham was directly mandated by the US Secretary of State to coordinate and implement regional US policy on economic, political, and humanitarian issues.

In May 2019, Africell and the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC, then known as the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, OPIC) agreed a \$100 million loan facility, in a partnership reflecting the US government’s strategic goal to deepen US investment in Africa and support US businesses operating in high-growth sectors of the African economy. Africell is the only US-owned mobile communications operator in Africa and is the first to receive financing from DFC.

Africell currently operates telecommunications networks in Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, and Uganda. In February 2021, Africell won an international public tender process to launch a new network in Angola. Angola is one of the biggest economies in sub-Saharan Africa with a population of over 30 million people, and the move to award Africell a universal electronic communications license was driven by the Angolan government’s desire to accelerate Angola’s economic performance and give consumers better access to world class mobile technologies and other value-added services. The terms of Africell’s investment from DFC were amended in May 2021 to bring the transformational Angola opportunity within its scope.

Africell’s Chairman and CEO **Ziad Dalloul** said: *“We are thrilled to welcome Ambassador Pham to Africell. He is a top expert on Africa and brings a unique blend of experience from his eminent academic career and his position as an influential Africa-focused US policymaker. As the only US-owned mobile network operator in Africa, Africell is setting an example for what can be achieved by international investors on the continent if they have the right people, vision, strategy and attitude. Appointing Ambassador Pham to Africell’s board is testament to the scale of our ambitions, and we expect his impressive standing, expertise and network in Africa to help our business capitalize on the extraordinary growth opportunities emerging in Angola and our other markets.”*

Ambassador **J. Peter Pham** said: *“Africell operates at the forefront of the telecommunications sector in Africa. My experience serving in Africa tells me that it is a continent worth investing in – and I believe that developing its private sector is key to unlocking its enormous potential. Africell is an illuminating case study for how US and other international companies can achieve sustainable growth in Africa through bold investments and transparent business activities. I am pleased to be joining Africell Group’s board because it has proven that it is a company which has a positive long-term impact not only on its direct customers, but also on the wider communities and societies in which it works.”*

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About Africell

Africell provides fast, low-cost and reliable mobile network coverage and related technology services to over 12 million subscribers in four African countries (Sierra Leone, The Gambia, DR Congo and Uganda). We will launch operations in a fifth country (Angola) in 2021.

Africell is a disruptor. We challenge inefficiency, embrace fresh thinking and deliver innovative products and services which make a practical difference to everyday people. Africell employs over 1,000 people in seven countries. We have US ownership and are headquartered in London, UK. Africell's positive social impact, entrepreneurial spirit and transparent business activities make us the ideal mobile network provider for Africa's future. For more information, visit www.africell.com or connect with us on [LinkedIn](#).

About J. Peter Pham

J. Peter Pham is a non-executive director on the Board of Africell Group, a distinguished fellow at the Atlantic Council (which he rejoined in March 2021), and a former United States Special Envoy for the Sahel Region with the personal rank of Ambassador. Ambassador Pham had previously been Atlantic Council vice president for research and regional initiatives and director of the Council's Africa Center. He is also currently a non-executive director of Rainbow Rare Earths Limited.



From 2018 to 2020, Ambassador Pham served as the United States Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa at the US Department of State with a mandate from the Secretary of State "for coordinating the implementation of U.S. policy on the cross-border security, political, and economic issues in the Great Lakes region, with an emphasis on strengthening democratic institutions and civil society, as well as the safe and voluntary return of the region's refugees and internally displaced persons."

In March 2020, he was appointed the first-ever US Special Envoy for the Sahel, a position created to assume "the lead in shaping, devising and coordinating U.S. strategy on the cross-border security, political, economic, assistance, and social issues arising in the Sahel as well as coordinating with both international partners and U.S. Government stakeholders to help return the Sahel to stability through programs to enhance security and support governance, political liberalization, social progress and economic development."

Prior to joining the Atlantic Council in 2011, Ambassador Pham was previously senior vice president of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy, and editor of its bimonthly journal, American Foreign Policy Interests. He was also a tenured associate professor of justice studies, political science, and Africana studies at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, where he was director of the Nelson Institute for International and Public Affairs. He served on the Senior Advisory Group of the US Africa Command from 2008-2013.

From 2008 to 2017 he also served as vice president of the Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa (ASMEA), an academic organization which represents more than 1,300 scholars of Middle Eastern and African Studies at more than 300 colleges and universities in the United States and overseas and was founding editor-in-chief of ASMEA's peer-reviewed Journal of the Middle East and Africa.



Ambassador Pham is the author of more than 300 essays and reviews and the author, editor, or translator of over a dozen books, including, most recently, *Somalia: Fixing Africa's Most Failed State* (Tafelberg, 2013; coauthored with Greg Mills and David Kilcullen). Dr. Pham also contributes to a number of publications including *The National Interest* and *Foreign Policy*, and regularly appears as a commentator on broadcast and print media outlets including CBS, PBS, VOA, CNN, the Fox News Channel, MSNBC, NPR, the BBC, Reuters, the Associated Press, Agence France-Presse, the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Washington Times, USA Today, Newsweek, US News & World Report, the Times of London, New Statesman, Maclean's, Le Monde, and Le Temps.

A longtime staunch advocate of robust American engagement with Africa, Ambassador Pham served as member of the USAID-funded International Republican Institute (IRI) delegation monitoring the historic post-conflict national elections in Liberia in 2005. He also served on the IRI pre-election assessment (2006) and election observation delegations to Nigeria (2007, 2011) and Somaliland (2010). He is also a frequent guest lecturer on African affairs at the Foreign Service Institute, the US Army War College, the Joint Special Operations University, and other US government professional educational institutions.

In 2015, the Regents of the Smithsonian Institution elected Ambassador Pham to the Board of the National Museum of African Art and re-elected him to additional terms in 2018 and 2021. From 2016-2021, he also served as co-chair of the Board.

Ambassador Pham is the recipient of numerous honors and awards from African countries in recognition of contributions made over the course of his career to strengthening relations between the United States and Africa, including Commander of the National Order of Mali, Commander of the National Order of Burkina Faso, Officer of the National Order of Merit of Niger, and Commander of the National Order of Merit of Gabon.