

July 31, 2020

HAPSMobile and Rwanda’s Ministry of ICT and Innovation Sign MoU to Study Provision of Mobile Internet Connectivity Using High Altitude Platform Stations

Today, the Ministry of ICT and Innovation and HAPSMobile Inc. (“HAPSMobile”), a subsidiary of SoftBank Corp. (TOKYO: 9434) announced they signed a Memorandum of Understanding (“MoU”) on July 29, 2020 under which both parties will conduct a Joint Research Project (“JRP”) that studies the use of High Altitude Platform Stations (HAPS) to provide mobile Internet connectivity in Rwanda.

As part of the JRP, the parties plan to conduct demonstration flights using HAPSMobile’s solar powered unmanned aircraft system (UAS) in Rwanda to provide 4G/5G Internet connectivity. The results of the JRP will be used to guide discussions between HAPSMobile and MINICT on potential commercial services in Rwanda and other African countries.

Junichi Miyakawa, Representative Director & CTO of SoftBank Corp., and also President & CEO of HAPSMobile, commented:

“Our mission at HAPSMobile is to bridge the digital divide and revolutionize mobile networks by leveraging HAPS. So we are very pleased and encouraged that we can work with the Rwandan government, a leading technological power in Africa, to study how our HAPS solution can be used to reach remote communities and enable better access to information. We look forward to working with the Ministry of ICT and Innovation on this research project so we can study potential commercial applications in Rwanda, and beyond.”

Paula Ingabire, Minister of ICT and Innovation of the Republic of Rwanda, commented “We enthusiastically welcome HAPSMobile, a SoftBank Corp. subsidiary, to do business in Rwanda. This joint R&D project is well aligned with our government’s vision of becoming a Proof of Concept Nation and we commit to supporting it towards fruition. This project will contribute to Rwanda’s utmost goal to bridge the digital divide and increase digital inclusion, not only in Rwanda but also across our region.”

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About HAPSMobile

HAPSMobile Inc., a subsidiary of SoftBank Corp. and minority-owned by AeroVironment Inc. (NASDAQ: AVAV), plans and operates a High Altitude Platform Station (HAPS) business with the aim of bridging the world's digital divide. HAPSMobile is primarily engaged in network equipment research and development for the HAPS business, construction of core networks, new business planning and activities for spectrum usage. AeroVironment, Inc. is HAPSMobile's minority owner and aircraft development partner for its a solar-powered unmanned aircraft designed for stratospheric telecommunications platform systems that flies approximately 20kms above ground in the stratosphere. HAPSMobile has a strategic relationship with Loon, a subsidiary of Alphabet, the parent company of Google. For more information, please visit <https://www.hapsmobile.com>.

About the Ministry of ICT and Innovation, Republic of Rwanda

The mission of the Ministry of ICT and Innovation is to address Rwanda's priorities for economic growth and poverty reduction through the development and coordination of national policies related to Information and Communication Technology policies.