



## **VODAFONE AND AST SPACEMOBILE UNVEIL LAUNCH PLANS FOR SPACE-BASED MOBILE NETWORK INITIALLY REACHING 1.6 BILLION PEOPLE**

- AST & Science LLC (“AST SpaceMobile”) secures necessary funding for first phase commercial launch of space-based mobile network.
- Project aims to transform mobile network coverage for the 49 largest countries in the equatorial regions – including Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ghana, Mozambique, Kenya, and Tanzania – from 2023.
- SpaceMobile will be the first space-based mobile network to connect directly to 4G and 5G smartphones without any need for specialized hardware.

**TEXAS, LONDON, JOHANNESBURG – December 16, 2020** – AST SpaceMobile, in partnership with Vodafone Group, today unveiled plans to launch the first phase of its space-based commercial mobile communications service in 2023. The company has secured the necessary funding to take the venture to this next stage, which will cover the 49 largest countries in the equatorial regions.

Vodafone wants to ensure that our customers are always connected and everyone benefits from a digital society. This is why we are a lead, strategic partner of AST SpaceMobile, which is uniquely positioned to provide universal mobile coverage to rural areas in Africa, and in the future, Europe, further extending our leading network. The space-based mobile network will also enable us to provide instant communications in the event of a natural or humanitarian disaster.

AST SpaceMobile will be the first service of its kind to connect standard mobile phones at 4G and 5G speeds using AST SpaceMobile’s patented space-based network. Today, more than five billion mobile subscribers constantly move in and out of wireless coverage, and AST SpaceMobile’s solution will fill these coverage gaps to enable people to stay connected whilst on the move. This is a significant breakthrough in helping to bring affordable mobile connectivity to more than half of the world’s population that do not have internet on their phone. Traditional satellite systems require expensive specialised satellite phones or ground antenna systems, which is different to AST SpaceMobile’s patented technology, where all that is needed is the phone in your pocket.

### **Vodafone Group Plc**

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The first tranche of AST SpaceMobile's launch plans will involve the use of 20 satellites to offer seamless, low-latency mobile connectivity that can be accessed by approximately 1.6 billion people across a vast geographical region. The initial service will target an area North and South of the equator, including rural and remote areas of a number of markets where Vodafone will integrate the technology into the services provided by its Vodacom, Safaricom and Vodafone brands. Subject to regulatory approval in each market, these will include DRC; Ghana; Mozambique; Kenya; and Tanzania. AST SpaceMobile will also apply for regulatory approval to launch the service in India.

Shameel Joosub, the CEO of Vodacom Group, said: "Providing affordable mobile coverage for everyone requires a blend of technologies and infrastructure, from traditional masts to small cells, balloons and satellites at the edge of space. While we have been adding deep rural network sites to connect remote communities without any coverage, the lack of power in some areas creates insurmountable obstacles. AST SpaceMobile will ensure that remote communities in many sub-Saharan African countries can have access to the latest digital services."

"We are thrilled to move forward in executing on phase one of our commercial launch in conjunction with Vodafone," said Abel Avellan, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of AST SpaceMobile. "Our high-speed, low latency platform represents the world's first venture aimed at massively closing the digital divide by bringing affordable and accessible connectivity to the regions that need it most. We believe our game-changing solution will serve to drive universal and global connectivity, allowing societies to utilise digital technology to gain greater access to knowledge and information."

In order to support the phase one commercial launch of its network, AST SpaceMobile has secured up to US\$462 million in gross proceeds in additional financing. This will come from existing investors in the company including Vodafone, Rakuten and American Tower as well as new financial investors including UBS O'Connor and a broad base of financial institutions.

AST SpaceMobile today also announced that it entered into a business combination agreement with New Providence Acquisition Corp. (NASDAQ: NPA, NPAUU and NPAWW), a publicly traded special purpose acquisition company, assuming no redemptions of New Providence's existing public stockholders, including the private placement backed by strategic partners, existing investors and a broad base of financial institutions. Upon closing of the transaction, AST SpaceMobile will become a publicly traded company, and it is expected that its common stock will be listed on the NASDAQ exchange under the symbol "ASTS". All AST SpaceMobile shareholders are retaining 100% of their equity in the combined company. The cash proceeds are expected to be used to fund phase one of the commercial launch of AST SpaceMobile's space assets.

Backed by an extensive IP and patent portfolio, AST SpaceMobile will enable global seamless roaming to and from terrestrial cellular networks, filling mobile coverage gaps around the world. With initial access to 1.3 billion subscribers from a group of the world's largest wireless communications companies, AST SpaceMobile's services will ultimately aim to meet the needs of the five billion mobile subscribers who face broadband connectivity issues when moving in and out of terrestrial cellular range and enable mobility access to more than half of the world population that does not have access to internet on their phone.

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#### About Vodafone

Vodafone is a leading telecommunications company in Europe and Africa. Our purpose is to “connect for a better future” and our expertise and scale gives us a unique opportunity to drive positive change for society. Our networks keep family, friends, businesses and governments connected and – as COVID-19 has clearly demonstrated – we play a vital role in keeping economies running and the functioning of critical sectors like education and healthcare.

Vodafone is the largest mobile and fixed network operator in Europe and a leading global IoT connectivity provider. Our M-Pesa technology platform in Africa enables over 45m people to benefit from access to mobile payments and financial services. We operate mobile and fixed networks in 21 countries and partner with mobile networks in 48 more. As of 30 September 2020, we had over 300m mobile customers, more than 27m fixed broadband customers, over 22m TV customers and we connected more than 112m IoT devices.

We support diversity and inclusion through our maternity and parental leave policies, empowering women through connectivity and improving access to education and digital skills for women, girls, and society at large. We are respectful of all individuals, irrespective of race, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, belief, culture or religion.

Vodafone is also taking significant steps to reduce our impact on our planet by reducing our greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2025 and becoming net zero by 2040, purchasing 100% of our electricity from renewable sources by 2025, and reusing, reselling or recycling 100% of our redundant network equipment.

For more information, please visit [www.vodafone.com](http://www.vodafone.com), follow us on Twitter at [@VodafoneGroup](https://twitter.com/VodafoneGroup) or connect with us on LinkedIn at [www.linkedin.com/company/vodafone](http://www.linkedin.com/company/vodafone).

#### About AST SpaceMobile

AST SpaceMobile is building the first, and only, global broadband cellular network in space to operate directly with standard, unmodified mobile devices based on our extensive IP and patent portfolio. Our team of engineers and space scientists are on a mission to eliminate the connectivity gaps faced by today's five billion mobile subscribers and finally bring broadband to the billions who remain unconnected. Learn more at [www.ast-science.com](http://www.ast-science.com) and follow AST SpaceMobile on Twitter [@AST\\_SpaceMobile](https://twitter.com/AST_SpaceMobile) and [Linkedln](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ast-science), and for an overview of AST SpaceMobile, check out this [video](#).