

Zain Malawi to rebrand to Airtel Malawi

 By [Gregory Gondwe](#)

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India's Bharti Airtel on 22 June 2010 formally announced their takeover of Zain Malawi after signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Malawi government which will in earnest rebrand from Zain Malawi to Airtel Malawi alongside all other Zain operations in Africa in September this year.

International CEO for Bharti Airtel, Manoj Kohli, put pen to paper on behalf of the mobile telecommunications firm while information and civic education minister, Leckford Thoto, signed on behalf of government.

Zain to Airtel overnight

"You will sleep with Zain and wake up a completely rebranded Airtel in all Zain companies in Africa just over night," declared Kohli.

The other good news for government was a pledge from the company to invest US\$100 million in Malawi operations within three years which will be directed at tariff reduction and coverage expansion.

Kohli says since Zain only reaches out to 3.5 million subscribers they intend to reach 7 million users in Malawi as they would be turning into an agriculture telecoms company by taking its services to rural areas where a lot of farmers live. He said they will be building the company's growth on Malawi's agro-based economy.

Increasing talk-time

On bringing down tariffs Kohli said since the average Malawian phone user has 40 minutes of talk-time per month due to an unattainable tariff rate, they now want to raise the bar to at least 250 minutes of talk-time.

"In India, phone users, talk for about 400 to 500 minutes per month, we can improve Malawi's talk-time to at least 250 minutes per month," he said.

ABOUT GREGORY GONDWE

Gregory Gondwe is a Malawian journalist who started writing in 1993. He is also a media consultant assisting several international journalists pursuing assignments in Malawi. He holds a Diploma and an Intermediate Certificate in Journalism among other media-related certificates. He can be contacted on gregorygondwe@gmail.com. Follow him on Twitter at @Kalipochi.

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