



## NEWS RELEASE

### **Internet messaging access in Zimbabwe more than doubles**

Internet-free email and online chat SMS service revolutionises Zimbabwean communications

Mobile email and online chat access in Zimbabwe will more than double with the launch of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe's new eTXT service.

Econet subscribers can now send and receive low-cost internet messaging via any standard SMS-capable mobile phone without being connected to the Internet.

In June 2010, only one in eight Zimbabweans (1.4 million people) had access to the internet, according to the International Telecommunications Union. Internet access in Zimbabwe had largely been limited to workplaces, education establishments and Internet cafés in urban areas.

Now Econet Wireless Zimbabwe is transforming its five million mobile phone subscribers' first generation handsets into virtual smartphones, using technology provided by ForgetMeNot Africa, a specialist in unified messaging systems for telecommunications operators.

ForgetMeNot Africa's unique Message Optimiser technology converts emails and online chat messages into SMS format, and vice-versa. It bypasses the need for internet access, and does not require subscriptions, smartphones, software downloads or data connections.

Douglas Mboweni, CEO of Econet Wireless Zimbabwe, said: "eTXT allow more and more of our subscribers to get access to internet messaging without having to purchase expensive smartphones. Because it allows subscribers to go on-line irrespective of the type of mobile handset they are using, eTXT will transform how millions of Zimbabweans stay in touch with each other."

The service incorporates popular chat services such as MSN Messenger, Yahoo!, Windows Live and Gtalk.

The new service will have a major impact in bridging the rural-urban digital divide by vastly extending internet penetration across rural and urban areas of Zimbabwe. The eTXT service will also be a vital tool for large enterprises and small business owners, giving them a simple, low-cost method of establishing two-way email and online chat communications with staff, sales reps, suppliers and customers without having to invest in new technology, handsets or infrastructure.

Jeremy George, Chief Operating Officer of ForgetMeNot Africa, said: "The launch of eTXT is another important stride in Zimbabwe's plans to develop its communications infrastructure. Econet Wireless Zimbabwe is revolutionising its subscribers' communications with friends and relatives – both in Zimbabwe and the estimated five million Zimbabweans living overseas – using technology that they're familiar with."

"eTXT is the sixth deployment of our unique technology in Africa as ForgetMeNot Africa expands its footprint across the continent. Mobile network operators in east, west, southern and central Africa have already successfully deployed Message Optimiser, instantly rocketing their subscribers' access to two-way email and chat."

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## **Notes To Editors**

Internet access data sourced from the International Telecommunication Union ([www.itu.int](http://www.itu.int))

For further editorial information, images or to arrange interviews please contact [fmn@pwkpr.com](mailto:fmn@pwkpr.com) or call +44 20 7609 1900

## **About ECONET Wireless Zimbabwe**

Econet is the largest telecommunications company in Zimbabwe, with an overall market share of over 70 per cent of the total mobile sector and a cellular subscriber base of over five million as at December 2010, the latest published figures available. Econet continues to expand network capacity to reach more subscribers in more areas.

The company's network was launched in July 1998 and the holding company listed in September 1998. It is now one of the largest listed companies on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange in terms of market capitalization.

## **About ForgetMeNot Africa**

ForgetMeNot Africa Ltd. is a "software as a service" (SaaS) company specialising in unified messaging that supports seamless interoperability between SMS, email and Instant Messaging clients for telecommunications operators. The core product is Message Optimiser which allows telecom operators to immediately provide cost-effective comprehensive unified messaging services to all of their customers without any upgrades to the device or any need for downloading new applications onto the device. This opens up a range of previously inaccessible services to many of their customers including 2-way email and 2-way instant messaging communication capability. For more information call +44 203 176 0763 or visit [www.fmnafrica.com](http://www.fmnafrica.com)