SLT-MOBITEL – DIGITALLY READY FOR A SYSTEM CHANGE IN SRI LANKA

SLT-MOBITEL announces national proposaxl for future-focused technology and digitally empowered citizens to usher change and growth.

Photography Sujith Heenatigala.



Rohan Fernando, Group Chairman, SLT.

SLT-MOBITEL announced a national proposal to enhance critical services and sectors and digitally empower citizens.

SLT-MOBITEL, one of the most powerful players in the telecommunications and technology sector, cites archaic legacy systems, inefficiency, corruption, high operational costs, and waste in critical industries and services as the main reason to

expedite a system change in the country.

The new system change proposed by SLT-MOBITEL places digitally empowered citizens at its foundation, with the digitalization of identities and strong digital security and privacy. This will serve as the building block for new technological innovations that can strengthen Digital Commerce and E-Governance in all aspects of operations critical to the county. SLT-MOBITEL has identified healthcare, education, transportation, agriculture, tourism, judiciary, banking, and finance as essential services and sectors that can thrive more efficiently and transparently under this new system.

Rohan Fernando, Group Chairman, SLT, said, “Much like Singapore did, Sri Lanka has the potential to transition to a Smart Nation, making innovative technology the backbone of every sphere of activity. By doing this, key issues facing the country can be addressed, and critical sectors and services can be transformed into highly efficient, transparent, and profitable systems which can transform people’s lives. Our vision is to move the country towards E-Governance and Digital Commerce. We have the broadest presence across the value chain and unparalleled capacity to meet the needs of tech companies, large corporates, and public and state institutions. With our capabilities and strong infrastructure across the country, we believe we are fully geared to undertake this challenge and bring about the change the people of this country want to see.”

SLT-MOBITEL, which began over 160 years ago as a state-owned national communications service provider, transformed itself into a highly profitable and efficient publicly listed conglomerate, offering technology and connectivity solutions and ready-to-go technology platforms, advanced network backbone services, and digital infrastructure. “The brand unification initiative of SLT-MOBITEL in 2020 brought together the best fixed and mobile technology services. It couldn’t have come at a better time, as the same year saw a dramatic increase in the need for technology and connectivity solutions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Seeing this surge and understanding the future demand, we extended our fiber network to 65,000km across Sri Lanka, offering fast and accessible broadband services to boost the digital capacity in the country. The SLT Group has the largest data centers in the country, and our longstanding partnerships with global tech giants like Microsoft, Oracle, and VMware mean we are fully equipped to provide the most secure hosting services for public and state institutions, as well as large corporates and foreign investors. As we continue to invest in infrastructure, our efforts are now focused on developing technological solutions for the challenges the country is

facing today and will face tomorrow. SLT-MOBITEL is digitally ready for that system change we all want to see in Sri Lanka," said Fernando.

Under this system change proposition, SLT-MOBITEL will focus on Healthcare, Education, Transportation, Agriculture, Tourism, Judiciary, Banking, and Finance. Access to healthcare is a basic need. However, the healthcare sector faces many challenges today, inhibiting citizens from accessing services and data. The proposal by SLT-MOBITEL aims to digitalize the healthcare sector and revolutionize the industry. It offers access to real-time information, remote patient monitoring, preventative care, timely assistance, healthcare analysis, and better patient care with data privacy and security. Digitalising the sector will give healthcare practitioners and citizens access to information anytime and improve the industry's efficiency and return on investment.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and recent economic challenges, access to continued education has become another national priority. These macroeconomic factors have left children and teachers no choice but to move towards online education. However, rural areas have limited access, and teachers require training in digital technology and eLearning solutions. eLearning and Smart Classrooms must be actively promoted as the future of education.

With these factors in mind, SLT-MOBITEL has outlined the steps to digitalize Sri Lanka's education sector. The 10,000+ schools in the country can be provided high-speed internet access through the company's expansive fiber network; processes can be automated by introducing digital tools and technology, while libraries can be digitized for inclusive and continued access. Further, teachers and students will be introduced to Learning Management Systems (LMS) to build a more agile and effective education sector.

With the increasing urbanization of the country, transportation and the congestion caused by it directly impact the economy. Loss of time while traveling, excessive fuel consumption, increased wear and tear of automobiles, and higher cases of road accidents all negatively impact national productivity.

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SLT-MOBITEL proposes the digitalization of the country's transportation sector. From multi-modal tour plans, online ticket reservations, tracking apps for public transportation such as buses and trains, providing onsite WiFi, and enabling cashless payments, Sri Lanka's transportation sector has tremendous potential to be more efficient and productive.

Sri Lanka's food security has become a national priority in light of many issues local farmers face, inhibiting their ability to meet demand. The current agriculture value chain is affected by obstacles at each stage. Irregular climate patterns and the onset of pests and diseases affect yield; price volatility and lack of accurate information on demand and supply affect farmers' profitability, and distribution can be inefficient and disorganized, leading to high wastage.

SLT-MOBITEL is driving the digitalization of Sri Lanka's agri value chain with the Helaviru Digital Economic Centre. This platform will give farmers easy access to information and insights and a trading platform for transparent transactions. The company is also accelerating the digital adoption of farming communities through capacity-building programs and by introducing smart farming solutions.

Tourism is a critical sector for Sri Lanka, especially in bringing in much-needed foreign exchange. However, the industry is currently struggling due to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact and recent global and local economic challenges. Data analytics and insights will be key in identifying Sri Lanka's competitive advantage against other regional countries and rebuilding a thriving tourism industry.

SLT-MOBITEL is developing a single web portal for all potential tourists to enable the country's tourism sector digitally. This platform will be a centralized tourism hub, providing tourists with the information they need to plan their stays or connect them with tour operators with pre-planned options. This platform will also provide much-needed data and insights on the visiting tourists, which can be used to develop the industry further.

Justice delayed is denied justice – the main issue plaguing Sri Lanka's judiciary. From the high number of court cases to the time taken to serve a verdict, the limited access to information, outdated systems needing multiple physical documents, and lack of integration within the judiciary all lead to delays in the process, making it inefficient.

Ishari Siriwardane, GM – Digital Transformation Projects, SLT briefly spoke on the transformational journey of SLT, and the brand unification, and the Company's support in terms of revenue and taxes to the government; substantial stability, profits, ESG practices, services in terms of digitalization and more.

SLT-MOBITEL's proposed solution is to digitalize the Sri Lankan judiciary system fully. From establishing a digitized record-keeping process to an automated platform to set hearing dates in commercial high courts, a virtual solution for court hearings when logistics become an obstacle, and the digital integration across other entities (i.e., Police) will lead to a more efficient judiciary system in the country. In a world where more people are working, playing, and living online, a world of opportunities awaits Sri Lankan businesses and entrepreneurs. Connectivity speed and access are critical for this future. SLT-MOBITEL's vision of transforming the current banking and finance sector to meet the demands of this future will see the digitalization of this critical sector, so it can support cashless transactions and become a catalyst to promote e-commerce in Sri Lanka.



Ishari Siriwardane, General Manager – Digital Transformation Projects, SLT.