Satellite power, African potential: How SES plans to shape the continent's connectivity

Africa's digital momentum is accelerating, and satellite technology is emerging as one of the continent's most powerful equalisers. SES lays out how its multi-orbit strategy, new scale, and sharpened focus aim to transform connectivity across Africa over the next five years.

Africa is moving into a new phase of satellite-driven connectivity, and within this rapidly evolving landscape, the strongest near-term growth opportunities lie in a few very clear areas: expanding broadband access to underserved and remote regions; supporting enterprise and government digitalisation; and enabling mobile backhaul for telecom operators who are racing to extend coverage to communities still waiting for reliable service.

SES sees these opportunities as particularly promising, and it is positioning itself to lead by drawing on the unique capabilities of its multi-orbit satellite fleet. By combining the strengths of both GEO and MEO satellites, SES is able to deliver high-throughput, low-latency connectivity into places where terrestrial infrastructure is limited, unreliable, or simply does not exist.

The company goes a step further by embedding itself into the fabric of the continent — its partnerships with top mobile network operators and local governments, along with its established on-the-ground teams across Africa, give SES a strategic foothold that allows it to address these high-potential markets with a blend of local insight and global scale.

The next generation of African connectivity

This momentum aligns with SES's long-standing ambition to help bridge digital divides, a goal that is now evolving into a vision of what the next generation of African connectivity could look like.

From SES's perspective, this future will be defined by the seamless integration of satellite and terrestrial networks, delivering ubiquitous, dependable, and affordable internet access to users of every type. In this emerging landscape, the enterprise and government segments are poised for the biggest leap forward. Their drive toward cloud adoption, fintech expansion, and broader digital transformation initiatives means they require highly reliable, flexible, and secure connectivity.

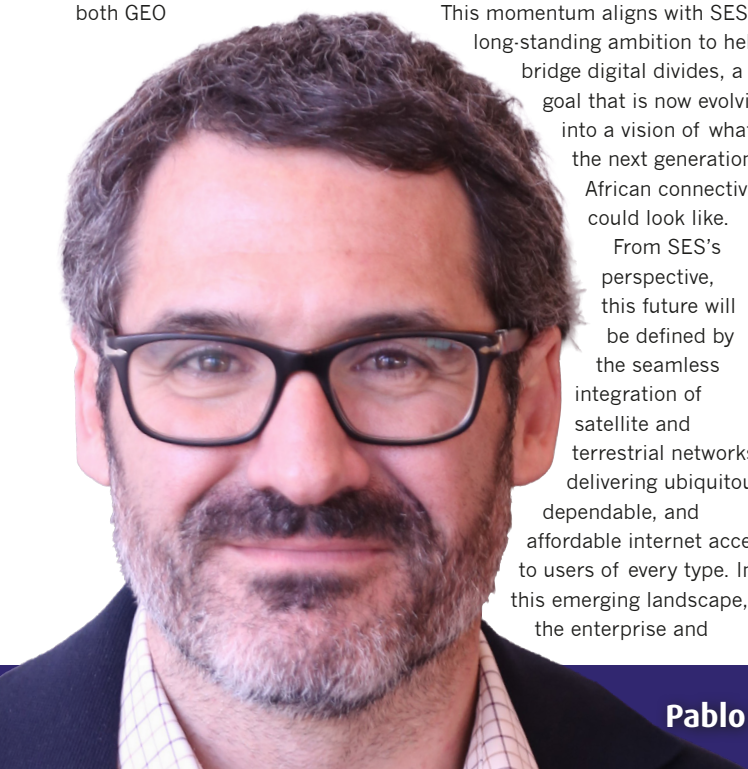
Mobility services — particularly mobile backhaul — are also expected to see substantial growth as mobile operators push deeper into rural and remote areas. With its advanced MEO and GEO satellites working in tandem, SES can support each of these segments with tailored solutions, powered by technologies like SD-WAN and network automation. These combined capabilities give SES the ability to deliver everything from secure government communications to scalable enterprise networks and consumer broadband services.

The strategic impact of SES's integration with Intelsat

The company's reshaped trajectory is further strengthened by SES's acquisition of Intelsat and the accompanying rebranding and restructuring. This integration has created a combined fleet of more than 50 satellites serving Africa, bringing an unmatched level of coverage, redundancy, and service diversity to customers across the continent.

The benefits are tangible: expanded video and data services, enhanced cellular backhaul, and greater flexibility in the way networks can be designed and deployed. Thanks to the pooled expertise and local presence of both organisations, SES is now able to roll out more robust, scalable, and innovative solutions that include hybrid network models and advanced managed services. The consolidation also gives SES the muscle to better support large-scale government and enterprise projects, accelerate digital inclusion, and respond more quickly to evolving market needs.

This merger comes at a time when many stakeholders argue that consolidation is reshaping the global satellite landscape. In Africa specifically, the SES–Intelsat integration is expected to influence both competition and innovation in meaningful ways. With a broader portfolio of services and technologies now available from a single provider, the combined entity is positioned to push forward with hybrid network models and enable new use cases such as cloud services and fintech applications. Its scale and resources will accelerate the rollout of next-generation connectivity solutions while helping to lower costs through operational efficiencies — a handy combination that tends to make competitors sit up and innovate faster. African customers ultimately stand to gain from this shift, as they will have more choice, better performance, and earlier access



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to cutting-edge technologies. By raising the bar, the consolidation encourages other players in the market to elevate their offerings as well, contributing to an overall improvement in the quality and availability of connectivity across the continent.

Why hybrid satellite networks are gaining momentum

Among the biggest drivers behind this innovation boom is the rise of hybrid network models, which are gaining strong traction across Africa.

SES is at the forefront of this movement, combining GEO and MEO capabilities to support emerging use cases such as cloud services, fintech expansion, and rural mobile coverage. The hybrid approach works because it aligns the strengths of each orbit with the applications that need them. GEO satellites provide broad coverage and strong broadcasting capabilities, while MEO satellites deliver low-latency, high-throughput performance that is ideal for real-time and cloud-based services.

SES's O3b mPOWER MEO constellation sits at the centre of this effort, working alongside GEO assets to deliver seamless and resilient connectivity across these critical use cases. Technologies like SD-WAN and network orchestration help optimise traffic routing and ensure consistent service performance, whether the task at hand is supporting edge computing, enabling secure financial transactions, or powering rural mobile towers.

Connecting Africa's hardest-to-reach

This hybrid strength positions SES well for some of Africa's most challenging environments — and the continent certainly has its fair share of them, from remote mining belts to rapidly expanding coastal cities. SES's ability to deliver differentiated, high-performance connectivity will stand out most clearly in verticals such as mining, energy, government, education, and media.

In remote mining regions, satellite connectivity enables everything from operational efficiency and safety monitoring to real-time data exchange that supports automated systems. Along the bustling coastlines, SES facilitates smart city initiatives, widespread enterprise cloud adoption, and high-capacity video distribution.

Meanwhile, government bodies and educational institutions benefit from secure, scalable networks that power public services and digital learning programmes, helping to bring communities into the digital era.

Sustaining leadership in a competitive landscape

With global players racing to capture the next wave of demand, SES recognises that staying ahead will require continued innovation and strategic focus.

The company believes it must keep pushing the boundaries of multi-orbit satellite technology, deepen its partnerships across local ecosystems, and expand its suite of managed services to maintain leadership and help shape the satellite industry's future direction in Africa. This means prioritising customer-centric solutions, accelerating the rollout of next-generation networks such as meoSphere, and supporting regulatory harmonisation that enables smoother, faster deployments.

SES also sees sustainability, digital inclusion, and workforce development as essential elements of its long-term strategy. By fostering collaboration with governments, enterprises, and rising space-sector innovators, the company aims to drive transformative change across the continent.

SES's role in Africa's digital transformation

Looking five years ahead, SES envisages playing a pivotal role in catalysing Africa's digital transformation. The company sees itself enabling universal broadband access, supporting smart infrastructure, and empowering digital education and entrepreneurship across diverse communities.

SES expects to be judged against a number of clear milestones: the number of communities it helps connect; the depth and breadth of its partnerships with governments and NGOs; the deployment of advanced satellite networks; and measurable contributions to economic development and social inclusion.

Ultimately, SES's success will be measured by its ability to bridge the digital divide, drive innovation, and deliver sustainable, high-performance connectivity that supports Africa's long-term growth. ■