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PRESS RELEASE

10th July, 2015

COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION IMPRESSED WITH SLBC-BO

The Parliamentary Committee on Information and Communications (CIC), chaired by Hon. Benneh Bangura, has returned from a week-long oversight visitations to the East, South, and Northern regions of the country. The CIC had earlier overseen MDAs operating in the Western Area before proceeding to the provinces.

The Chairman of the Committee, Hon. Benneh Bangura, explained that the purpose of the oversight was constitutionally mandatory as contained in the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. He underscored the roles and functions of Parliament, noting legislation, representation, and oversight aimed at realizing value for funds appropriated for development. He furthered that the reason for the oversight was not to witch-hunt anyone, but to inquire into the activities of MDAs under its purview, and proffer recommendations which may result in legislation. The report, he said will be tabled and debated in Parliament.

The Committee in its deliberations with SLBC-Bo and Kenema discussed the need for the provision of stipends for volunteers, content and programming, energy, subvention to SLBC, under-staffing, disconnect between SLBC Headquarters and its regional offices, income and expenditure, and the need for better communication between SLBC and the regional offices. The Committee was so impressed with the innovative work of the management of SLBC-Bo that it gave them the sum of Le 1 Million Leones for striving to meet the information needs of the Southern Region. For NATCOM officials in Kenema, Bo, Moyamba, and Makeni, during the proceedings of the CIC, the Committee said that the corporate image of NATCOM in Freetown should be replicated in the provincial offices, and local trainings for staff should also be enhanced. SIM card registration, energy, motor-bike and vehicular constraints, regulation, monitoring, and consumer complaints were also discussed. In an engagement with SIERRATEL Kenema, Bo, and Makeni, the Committee recommended that SIERRATEL should extend its products and services to other parts of the country, and for its services to be used on smart phones among other things.

The Committee visited the respective agencies operating in Kenema, Bo, Moyamba, and Makeni with the aim of getting first-hand information on their activities, and chart the way forward to enhance national development.

This is a by-partisan Committee consisting of 16-Members including 9-APC, 6-SLPP, and 1 Paramount Chief Representative.