



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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PRESS RELEASE



PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION CONCLUDES OVERSIGHT

The Parliamentary Oversight Committee on Communication Technology and Innovation chaired by Hon. Boston Munda has on Saturday 29/06/2024 concluded a three-day oversight visit to various telecommunications facilities in the provinces.

The purpose of the oversight visits was to evaluate the effectiveness of the broadband internet connectivities and the impacts of Mobile Network Accessibility. The Committee assessed the communications infrastructure, offices and the services of NaTCA, UADF and SALPOST in Port Loko, Bo, Kenema and Moyamba Districts respectively.

In his statements, the Parliamentary Chairperson, Hon. Boston Munda commended both Parliament and the Government for supporting the Committee to carryout its activities as prescribed in the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. Hon. Munda highlighted the mandate and work of the Committee and went on to say that they were out in the field to have firsthand information on the operational activities of the various entities that are under their purview for purposes of supervising their mandate, services, and compliance with regulations, and their achievements and challenges.

In Port Loko District, the Committee visited the burnt office of SALPOST and convened stakeholders meeting that resulted in a resolution of the land dispute between SALPOST and the landowners.

In Bo District, the Committee visited the Postal Service and the National Telecommunications Authority respectively.

At the Postal Service, the Acting Post Master, Mr. Willey Davies explained to the Committee how they received letters from Freetown for delivery in Bo District. He explained the process of receipt and dispatch of letters and other items to the four sections of Bo District. He also highlighted the challenges of the postal service including the distribution of letters and cleaning of the facilities. "We received and dispatched letters within the country", he said.

At the National Telecommunications Authority in Bo, the Acting Manager, Engineer Mohamed Kembah said they do a constant monitoring including on-the-spot checks to MNOs, Internet Service Providers, Radio and TV stations for quality services. He said they also monitor spectrum payments and also do community outreach on the education of cyber security. The Head of NaTCA in Bo also noted the delays to access Police Permits for call log requests to MNOs for purposes of investigating cybercrimes.

In terms of challenges, he said they are using their private vehicles to do official duties and went on to inform the Committee on cyber related arrests. He expressed frustrations over the lack of equipment to enhance their operational activities.

At the Kenema Post Office, its delivery staff, Prince Foday explained to Committee that only two retired staff are working in the Postal Service and went on to narrate the deplorable working conditions at the post office.

At the National Telecommunications Authority in Kenema, the Committee was very displeased with the overall management of the facility. The Committee observed that, the conduct of the Manager, Mr. Lamin Lahai was adversely affecting their operations.

Similar sentiments were also expressed by the Manager relative to lack of monitoring equipment. "Equipment to monitor the operational activities of telecommunications is totally absent", Mr. Lamin revealed. Mr. Lamin also said in the process of monitoring, they have found out that sim cards are sold without registration and the due process of the law.

Both Heads of NaTCA in Bo and Kenema presented huge quantities of unregistered sims sold by agents to customers without going through the due process.

Noticeably, the Committee observed that only Qcell had the least amount of confiscated sims. According to the Head in Kenema, Qcell Sim Sales Agents were more compliant.

In Moyamba District, Yoyema community, the Committee joined the rural telephone project symbolically launched by Universal Access Development Fund and Ministry of Technology and Innovation with the theme: "Expanding to the Underserved and Unserved". Making his submission on the occasion, Hon. Boston Munda expressed gratitude over the initiative and admonished the community to take care of project tower and secure it for the general good.

The Chairman explained the roles and responsibilities of MPs legislation, representation and oversight. He said most of the benefits Sierra Leoneans are getting was due to passage of positive laws by the Parliament of Sierra Leone. He called on the Minister to support Universal Access

Development Fund (UADF) to implement more projects for deprived communities around the country.

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