

GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE PRESS RELEASE

Freetown, Wednesday 26th August, 2015... The Government of Sierra Leone hosted a Regional Ministerial Consultative Meeting on Ebola: Leveraging Information and Communication Technology to Save Lives. The event was organized by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and supported by the Governments of Guinea and Liberia. The meeting provided a platform for sharing information on the Ebola affected countries and officially adopted a strategy to use Big Data and Call Data Records before, during and after the outbreak of epidemics and diseases such as Ebola.

“We applaud the Government of Japan for this singular act of coming to the aid of the world community in utilizing the power of technology to rescue mankind. We also applaud the ITU for deciding to launch this Big Data project as a pilot in Sierra Leone. It was also great that the ITU has committed itself to Sierra Leone in other areas such as emergency communication, regulatory capacity building and infrastructure”, said HE the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma.

The Hon Minister of Information and Communications, Alhaji Alpha Bakarr Kanu, said, “the Government of Sierra Leone is committed to providing the means by which ICT applications and solutions are available to its citizens at affordable costs. It is also an obligation on the part of the Government of Sierra Leone to provide the enabling regulatory environment that will enhance the growth of the sector and promotion of digital literacy.”

ITU is already working on a Big Data pilot project that involves Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia. Shortly after the recent outbreak of the Ebola disease, ITU donated satellite communication systems to Sierra Leone to provide connectivity in rural areas.

Momoh Konte, Chairman of NATCOM said, ***“at the peak of our Ebola scourge, the ITU gave Sierra Leone hand-held satellite phones which we used to reach very remote parts of our country that were not easily accessible. This gesture saved lives and one can imagine how many more lives would have been saved, had we leveraged more Information and Communication Technologies in the fight against the EVD.”***

Cosmas Zavazava, Chief of Project Support and Knowledge Management Department of ITU said, “ITU is committed to help the international community use information and communication technologies for disaster risk reduction and management. There is no meaningful socio-economic development without ensuring resilience and network redundancy, and effective disaster preparedness and response. This high-level event contributes to global efforts to save human life particularly by addressing emerging challenges such as the Ebola.”