

NATCOM Capacitates Women and Girls in Information & Communications Technology



The National Telecommunications Commission (NATCOM) held a two days workshop on Information and Communications Technology in the town of Magburaka, Tonkolili District. The workshop started on Thursday 27th and ended on Friday, 28th March 2014. The workshop was primarily to capacitate women and girls in the rural communities of Sierra Leone of ICT skills. Magburaka town is perhaps the fourth place in which such training has been taken. 100 participants took part in the said training. The opening ceremony was graced by the Paramount Chief of Magburaka, the Deputy District Council Chairman of Tonkolili District and four female speakers who made brief statements on ICT and its benefits in all aspects of life.

The Deputy District Council Chairman gave the NATCOM team a warm embrace and also thanked them for taking such an initiative to bring ICT to the door steps of the people in Magburaka town.

In her welcome address, Consumer Affairs Manager of NATCOM, Mrs. Eburn Yankson emphasized the rights of women according the United Nations Charter on human and people's right and the Interest the telecoms umbrella body, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) has in enhancing women's skills in ICTs. The ITU she said is replicated in Sierra Leone whereby women and girls in places such as Waterloo, Tombo and Pujehun have benefitted. Knowledge in ICT Mrs. Yankson said can broaden women's horizon in diverse ways including e-applications such as e-government, e-banking, e-health, etc. She informed that ICT is a major component in the eight pillars of the Agenda for Prosperity. As regulators of the sector, she went on, "we take very seriously its expansion through practical hands-on approach in the bid to achieve his Excellency the President's dream of making Sierra Leone an ICT savvy nation."

In her opening remarks, Chairperson of the workshop, Mrs. Mariatu Kamara, a Social Welfare Development Officer in Magburaka Town encouraged women and girls in the community to take the training very seriously. Training of women and girls in ICT she said is a step in the right direction. She invoked the adage “if you educate a woman you educate a nation,” to inspire the recipients of the training. Mrs. Mariatu Kamara was pleased with the 30% quota already allocated to women by the government, and ready to advocate for another 10% increment.

In her key note address, guest speaker of the workshop, Mariatu Kamara, a teacher at the Magburaka Boys Secondary School said that without women the society will not thrive, adding, girls should be encouraged to pursue basic education to balance the gender inequality. “It is no long a time we should keep on denying women and girls access to basic education, health and equal opportunity at work.’ A she put it, “what men can do, women can do better.”



The IT team, headed by Messrs. Victor Barber- Richards and Marruff Barrie of the National Telecommunications Commission introduced the participants to different types of computers and their parts; how to use the internet, to browse, creating an email address, the basic processing instructions and ICT applications. Each participant was given a pamphlet on Basic Computing to take home.

At the first session of the training, participants were shown a power point presentation on basic computer training skills like what is a computer, types of computers and parts of a computer. The next session was on Internet skills and what makes the World Wide Web, why do we need a browser etc. At the second day of the workshop the women and girls were trained on basic Word Processing, instructions like File Name, Help Menu, File Menu, Open New File, Save/Save As, Close, Tab key etc. The final session was on ICT application and benefits in all aspect of life such as e-government, e-business, e-learning, e-health, e-employment, etc

Participants in the training workshop appealed to NATCOM to have such educative programmes organized on a quarterly basis to enable them grasp fully the basics in computing and the use of e-applications.

