

## ORANGE FINALISES ACQUISITION OF AIRTEL IN SIERRA LEONE

The National Telecommunications Commission, (NATCOM), Sierra Leone's telecoms regulatory authority on Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2016, issued 2G and 3G licences to Orange, a French owned telecoms group to operate in Sierra Leone

The issuance of the licence completes the acquisition of Airtel, one of the leading mobile operators in Sierra Leone by Orange and its Senegal-based partner Sonatel, since the signing of an agreement with Bharti Airtel International (Netherlands) in January 2016.

With a mobile penetration of around 50% of the population, Sierra Leone offers considerable growth potential, particularly at a time when significant investments are underway to extend the operator's 3G network. This network, which already offers coverage in Freetown and other major towns in Sierra Leone, is set to provide internet access to customers living outside major urban areas.

The Chairman and Commissioner of NATCOM, Momoh Kemoh Konte was optimistic that “the acquisition will enable customers in Sierra Leone to benefit from the support of the Sonatel group and take advantage of the Orange group's expertise and momentum in terms of innovation and development of the digital ecosystem”.



*Chairman and Commissioner Momoh Kemoh Konte (L) handing over the signed Licences to the new CEO of Orange, Sekou Drame (R)*

Following the recent launch of operations in Liberia and Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone becomes the 21<sup>st</sup> country in Africa and the Middle East to join the Orange group.

Bruno Mettling, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Orange group and Chairman & CEO of Orange Middle East and Africa (MEA), stated: “*We are pleased to announce that the acquisition of*

*the mobile operator Airtel in Sierra Leone has been finalised. This new acquisition, which will be consolidated by Sonatel, will further strengthen Orange's strategic position on the African continent."*

