

THE FUTURE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA ETHICS IN SIERRA LEONE”.

The Chairman of the National Telecommunication Commission (NATCOM) Momoh Konteh on 6th May 2017 delivered a public lecture on the topic **“THE FUTURE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA ETHICS IN SIERRA LEONE”.**

Officially welcoming the NATCOM Chairman the Vice Chancellor of UNIMAK Professor Joseph Turay said the history of the telecommunication industry will not be complete without mentioning the name of the current NATCOM Chairman Momoh Konteh. “His contributions to the growth of Information Technology is remarkable. His contributions in the growth of the education sector is worthy of emulations” he noted. Professor Joseph Turay further explained that he is grateful to Chairman Momoh Konteh for accepting the invitation to the 56th Independent Public lecture this year. “Accepting our invitation shows that the NATCOM boss is committed to the building of public private partnership in the country” he ended.

During his lecture Momoh Konteh said he is Very grateful that UNIMAK invited him to talk on “The future of Telecommunications and Media Ethics in Sierra Leone”. When he took over as chairman of the commission he called a public dialogue forum in order to hear from the consumer and operators for the way forward in the telecommunications industry in Sierra Leone . Mr. Konteh stated that the position of NATCOM Chairman carries a lot of temptation because companies always want to maximize profit so they can do anything that will give them head way .

“Two years ago I find a company 1.2 Million Dollars for poor quality of service. Two night after the fine a cousin of mine brought 400,000 USD for me to forget about the fine. That was on Wednesday .On Thursday they increase the money to 500,000 USD which I totally refused . I immediately called a press conference and announced it to the world that the company have been charge for poor service delivery in the Sierra Leone . And then the company then paid the 1.2 Million USD. If you allow yourself to be bribed against the interest of your country then your children will pay the price” he said.

Mr. Konteh stated that creating fake news on social media is unethical . “As students of UNIMAK it is your responsibility to verified messages before you post them” he noted . He informed his audience that Facebook has consented to work with NATCOM to identify people that are posting fake news that will undermine the security of the state especially during the elections next year.

When he took over NATCOM the internet penetration rate in the country was less than 2% but today from the raw data coming from the ITU NATCOM the internet penetration increased to 3% and telephone penetration in rural areas increased by 45%. Presently Fintonia in the Tambaka chiefdom now have telephone, internet and mobile banking facilities . on 1st June

2017 Koinadugu District will be the only district in the country that will have 87% connectivity in the whole country. In 2015 the commission came up with the one area network within the Mano River Union.

Historically , many people believed that technology started 10 years ago ,not knowing that technology is as old as mind kind .Technology started in 3000BC in the era called the mechanical era . Then people started communicating before graduating in to modern technology . For instance Face book have 1.1b users monthly of which 83 million people are using it wrongly. Technology getting negative effective worldwide. Technology is also very useful these days even though there criminals using technology or crime purposes we don't make use of what is offer .

Mr. Konteh intimated his audience that the platform of all mobile money transfer should be regulated by NATCOM. He said 60% of people that uses mobile money transfer are without bank account in West Africa and Sierra Leone carries the highest percentage . Addressing the issue of fake sim cards Chairman Konteh said in 2015 there were 8000 fake sim cards in the country just for one network,7800 fake mobile phones and 612 sim cards from one network that is using the same number. In the next 3 weeks NATCOM will start disconnecting these lines” he explained.

Ending his lecture with current statistic of social media like Facebook ,Mr. Konteh informed his audience that from Wednesday to Thursday is the highest pick of Facebook usage in the country as this happened from 1 am to 3 am , mostly between the age of 29 and 35 . Whiles the percentage of older people using Facebook varies between the ages of 55 to 70 years old .

This is the first time UNIMAK is inviting a higher personality from NATCOM to deliver a public lecture . Lecturer Momoh Konteh interacted with the students and members of the public during his lecture. A Development Studies year two students Annette Kamara appreciated the presence of the NATCOM Chairman in their midst because this is the first time she is receiving information relevant to her as a consumer .

Another students from the Accounting and Finance Department Agness Matha Koroma expressed concerns over the circulation of fake news around especially Face book and Whatsapp. This is an unethical behavior she believed NATCOM should put to an end.

A normal resident of Makeni Ibrahim Jalloh said he is happy to be there because he now know that Information Technology is solid catalyst for development but more should be done to be done to enhance internet rural connectivity across the country.

Many that attended the lecture believed that the National Telecommunication Commission has a lot more to do in order to increase mobile phone access and internet connectivity in every district and every chiefdom in Sierra Leone.