



MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION,  
TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

**2024 SIERRA LEONE INNOVATES:  
TECH SUMMIT**

**NEWSLETTER**

# MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



## Salima Monorma Bah

Minister of Communication,  
Technology and Innovation

**We must dream big;** there are no limitations; there is no ceiling to where we can stand, and that has been my guiding star.

**His Excellency's vision** to position Sierra Leone, regardless of our size, among global leaders in technology has led to the unveiling of our **Felel Tech City** project initiative today.

**Dear Innovators, Development Partners, and Friends,**

As we conclude the remarkable 2024 Sierra Leone Innovates: Tech and Innovation Summit, I am filled with immense pride and optimism for the future of our great nation. This summit has not only showcased the extraordinary talent and creativity within Sierra Leone but has also solidified our commitment to embracing technology and innovation as key drivers of sustainable development.

Over the past three days, we have witnessed the convergence of over 4,000 participants from various regions and backgrounds, including more than 1,000 university students who represent the bright future of our country. Your enthusiasm, dedication, and innovative spirit have been truly inspiring.

Our goal is to create a conducive ecosystem that nurtures innovation and entrepreneurship. The diverse range of ideas and solutions presented during the summit, from digital agriculture tools to cutting-edge fintech applications, demonstrates that we are well on our way to achieving this. It is clear that Sierra Leone is brimming with potential, and we must continue to provide the support and resources necessary for our innovators to thrive.

The participation of so many young minds from across the nation is particularly heartening. Our youth are not only the leaders of tomorrow but also the innovators of today. By equipping them with the necessary skills and opportunities, we are laying the foundation for a prosperous and technologically advanced Sierra Leone. Programs such as the Youth Empowerment through Tech Education and the Agriculture Innovation Challenge are important in this endeavor.

The summit has also underscored the importance of collaboration. By bringing together government policymakers, private sector stakeholders, development partners, and industry experts, we have promoted an environment where ideas can be exchanged and partnerships can be formed, and innovative solutions can be scaled. This summit is essential as we continue to navigate the challenges and opportunities of the digital age.

As we move forward, our focus will remain on accelerating digital transformation, enhancing societal growth, and driving economic development through technology. The impact and connections made during this summit will guide our efforts in the months and years ahead.

I would like to extend gratitude to all participants, speakers, sponsors, and organizers who made this summit a resounding success. Your contributions have been invaluable, and I look forward to seeing the remarkable advancements that will emerge from our collective efforts.

Together, let us continue to innovate, inspire, and transform Sierra Leone into a country of technological excellence.

With warm regards,

# CHIEF MINISTER'S SPEECH AND INTRODUCTION OF THE PRESIDENT

Today you will allow me to introduce to you the father of transformation, digitization, and innovation. That is simple and deserving, because when he visions, when he talks, we deliver.

Here is a man who, in 2018, appointed a 31-year-old to start a Directorate of Science, Technology and Innovation; five years later, he appointed a 32-year-old graduate of that same institution to become the Minister of Communication, Technology and Innovation.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have met many people around the world: academicians, philanthropists, Business and political leaders. I have said this before and I will say it again: our keynote speaker is one of the most visionary people I have ever met in my life.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, His Excellency Retire Julius Maada Bio, a man who, when proposing his new direction vision, many of us did not get it. Today, more than half of the people in this room and those you saw on television have benefited directly from his Human Capital Development vision. Many of the entrepreneurs here were directly enabled by him. He is a man of patience, yet so impatient for change that he even dabbled into learning how to code. He believes in a brighter future for Sierra Leone—a future he believes can be accelerated through technology, Innovation and digitization. When he talk, we listen; when he proposes, we will deliver.

To welcome the father of transformation, digitization, and innovation. a round of applause for his Excellency Brigadier Retired, Julius Maada Bio.

**Moinina David Sengeh**  
Chief Minister & Chief Innovator Officer,  
Republic of Sierra Leone

# PRESIDENT BIO'S SPEECH AT THE 2024 SIERRA LEONE INNOVATES: TECH SUMMIT

I am excited to be here. I have always said that we cannot afford to be end users in this 4th Industrial Revolution. For all the revolutionary innovations Africans have been on the receiving end of, this time we are determined not to be end users but to be leaders, to be part of what is being developed.

It's a great pleasure to be here at this inaugural meeting of the Sierra Leone Innovate Tech Summit. This groundbreaking summit serves as a platform for us all to bring together various actors from our technology and innovation ecosystem to share ideas and forge new paths for a better future for everyone.

Our world today is going through an unparalleled transformation as a result of the outpouring of human intelligence and ingenuity in the fields of innovation and technology, all catalyzed by the advancement in computer science. The Fourth Industrial Revolution is upon us as a nation. I have said and will say again:

*"We cannot afford to stand back and watch as mere end users; rather, we must leverage the opportunities available to us and enhance service delivery".*

This summit offers an opportunity to recalibrate our collective achievements in technology and innovation and to trust in a shared vision for a brighter and more prosperous future for Sierra Leone and the region in the digital world. Technology and innovation are not mere scientific discoveries aimed at mesmerizing us with cutting-edge technologies and gadgets; rather, they are about positively using these tools to revolutionize our institutions and empower our citizens.

However, we should not be oblivious to the fact that the rapid advancement in computer science, technology, and innovation also presents imminent threats to social cohesion, human security, personal safety, and privacy. We have been using diverse social media tools, artificial intelligence, software, automated systems, and high-tech robotics. The world seems to be in a constant state of flux. The line between reality and creativity is changing daily, becoming distorted, and often indistinguishable. Sierra Leone, like many other countries in the region, stands at the crossroads of unprecedented opportunities but is equally faced with daunting challenges.

We must position ourselves to take advantage of the opportunities presented by these innovations and technologies since we cannot alienate ourselves from the global digital ecosystem. In that regard, it is imperative that we make timely, strategic decisions and investments to ensure that we can reap the benefits of the Fourth Industrial Revolution that is upon us.

This is my expectation of the Sierra Leone Innovates Tech Summit. Ladies and gentlemen, let me take you through some of the critical steps my government has taken to achieve this vision of exploring the opportunities in our digital environment. Foremost, as a government, we recognize that we have a critical role to play in creating a conducive environment to foster innovation, and so we have embraced this opportunity. In 2018, my government established the Directorate of Science, Technology and Innovation with a clear mandate to leverage emerging technologies to support the government in delivering its national development plan.

*"It is cardinal in my government's plan to use technology and innovation to accelerate service delivery. In 2019, we launched the National Innovation and Digital Strategy—a 10-year plan to embrace the concept of a digital country".*

The intention is to position Sierra Leone as a hub for AI and digital privacy research, innovation, and technology, and to promote a digital economy that will positively impact citizens. Now we are realizing that vision through our government system. In my second term of office, my government has gone further to identify technology and infrastructure as one of the Big Five Game Changers in the new Medium-Term National Development Plan, 2024-2030.

*"We have also established the Ministry of Communication, Technology and Innovation to drive this strategy and to collaborate and coordinate with other like-minded agencies and private sector institutions to build upon these foundations for our future".*

In terms of promoting education to become competitive in the digital space and global job market, we saw the need to invest in human capital to ensure that our citizens are equipped with the requisite knowledge and skills to meet the demands of the global digital economy. This extends to fostering a culture of creativity, critical thinking, and lifelong learning.

**H.E. Rtd. Brg. Dr.  
Julius Maada Bio**  
President of the Republic  
of Sierra Leone



# PRESIDENT BIO'S SPEECH AT THE 2024 SIERRA LEONE INNOVATES: TECH SUMMIT

In my first term, my government prioritized free, quality education as the flagship of our human capital development agenda.

*"Today, I'm glad to report that Sierra Leone is one of the few countries in the region where female students in any STEM program are guaranteed a full tuition-free education up to university level."*

To promote digital literacy at all levels, my government aims to connect every school in Sierra Leone to internet facilities through a partnership with the Giga Project. About 450 schools have already been selected for connectivity over the next three years. We have also invested in integrating technology into the curriculum and providing students with hands-on experience in fields such as software engineering, robotics, and data science.

Additionally, we have prioritized the establishment of digital learning hubs in various parts of the country that serve as safe spaces for youth not in formal education to improve their access to basic digital skills training.

In addition to the policy initiatives we are implementing to expand the digital space, we have also endeavored to integrate multiple government services into a unified platform, empowering citizens to access a range of government-supported services through a single interface. In 2018, the Bank of Sierra Leone made the country the second in Africa to launch the FinTech Sandbox project.

This has provided an innovative regulatory environment for new financial technologies to be tested before launch in the marketplace. These efforts have increased the adoption of digital financial services, improving financial inclusion and stimulating economic development. To promote digital inclusion, we are determined not to leave anyone behind. To fully maximize the opportunities technology and innovation offer us, it is crucial that every Sierra Leonean, regardless of their background or location, has the opportunity to access the digital world through mobile or internet services.

*"As a government, we have invested heavily in expanding our network infrastructure, both in the capital city of Freetown and in rural areas. Today, Freetown enjoys 85% coverage of fiber, and we have expanded the national terrestrial backbone and access network to 14 out of 16 districts."*

Together with our partners in the private sector, the Ministry of Communication, Technology, and Innovation has set a target of achieving 100% 3G and 70% 4G mobile coverage by the end of next year, while also increasing rural connectivity. Complementing this, two of our mobile operators piloted 5G coverage last year.

Ladies and gentlemen, today we witnessed the official launch of Starlink in Sierra Leone at this summit, underscoring our commitment to enhancing connectivity and providing every Sierra Leonean with the opportunity to access the wealth of information and opportunities available online. Use that for development, not for gossiping. Use that for development, not to threaten national security.

Our preoccupation as one of the least developed countries is to latch onto every available opportunity. Responsible members of our society should not use the internet to incite unnecessary strife but to access opportunities and be part of the global system.

We are also delighted to announce a \$50 million grant from the World Bank in support of our digital transformation project, which will significantly contribute to expanding our broadband infrastructure and upgrading our network and resilience frameworks. This project will also enhance digital literacy skills for both the public and private sectors and deliver key digital government services.

In 2020, we launched the first-ever drone corridor in West Africa, successfully piloting a medical drone delivery program. We are now developing a surveillance drone program that will impact sectors such as agriculture, fishing, mining, and the environment.

I urge the delegation of ICT ministers from regional countries, our development partners, and all summit participants to embrace collaboration for our collective benefit. We are eager to share ideas and catch up with the rest of the world. This summit is an ideal platform for us to share our national innovation and entrepreneurship agenda, including the Felel Tech City Project.



**H.E. Rtd. Brg. Dr.  
Julius Maada Bio**  
President of the Republic  
of Sierra Leone

2/3

# PRESIDENT BIO'S SPEECH AT THE 2024 SIERRA LEONE INNOVATES: TECH SUMMIT

The Felei Tech City Project aims to provide a home for bright and innovative minds, helping them create solutions to our challenges and contribute to economic diversification. This project will foster digital skills, provide access to global digital job markets, and create thousands of jobs.

We are committed to business-friendly policies and public-private partnerships to promote innovation and attract investment.

Ladies and gentlemen, this summit is not just a celebration of what we have achieved. It is a call to action for what we must continue to do. Sierra Leone was once the beacon of hope in Africa for higher education, boasting one of the first universities in the subregion, Fourah Bay College. Today, we want to rekindle that spirit by playing a leadership role in technology and innovation.

*"I encourage entrepreneurs and researchers to dream big and address challenges like climate change, food insecurity, and unemployment. I urge investors and financial institutions to believe in the potential of Sierra Leone's young innovators."*

*Let us work together to leverage technology, foster innovation, and create a digital economy that benefits everyone. This summit marks the beginning of our journey to make Sierra Leone a better place and a contributor to the global economy.*

Thank you all for being here today. Let us walk together to turn this vision into reality for a better future.



**H.E. Rtd. Brg. Dr.  
Julius Maada Bio**  
President of the Republic  
of Sierra Leone

3/3

# TECH SUMMIT AT A GLIMPSE



**4,000+**

Delegates in Sierra Leone and across other countries



**15**

Countries including Ghana, Vietnam, the United Kingdom, the United States, Kazakhstan, and Nigeria



**50+**

Speakers



**09**

MoUs signed



**200+**

Government Officials



**15**

Breakout Sessions



**71**

Booths Showcased



**100+**

Innovators/  
Incubators  
Showcase



# MOCTI HOSTS THE FIRST-EVER TECH SUMMIT IN SIERRA LEONE

The Ministry of Communication, Technology, and Innovation (MoCTI), in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) and the Ministry of Youth Affairs (MoYA), hosted the 2024 Sierra Leone Innovates, a three-day tech summit which took place at the Freetown International Conference Centre, Bintumani Hotel, in Freetown, from June 11th to 13th, 2024.

The 2024 Tech Innovation Summit brought together innovators, start-ups, policymakers, private sector stakeholders, investors, development partners, thought leaders and experts in the tech industry. Attendees and participants spanned from four Mano River Union (MRU) countries, 3,000 plus delegates, and 50 plus panelists across 10 sectors.

The summit sought to build a conducive ecosystem, promote youth development, promote innovative entrepreneurship, and accelerate digital transformation in order to enhance societal growth and economic development. It provided attendees with the opportunity to benefit from high level plenary discussions on a number of topics including: how to monetize contents, career options for content creators, creating high value contents on social media, growing your platform, ways to address misinformation, etc. Also, attendees had the opportunity to witness tech expos, innovation showcases, pitch competitions, policy roundtable discussions, private sector sessions, government workshops, and networking opportunities.



Notably, the Agriculture Innovation Challenge empowered youth to develop tech solutions for agriculture, aligned with "Feed Salone" goals. Key focus areas included climate-smart agriculture, digital agriculture, mechanization, waste reduction, and agri-education tech.

Announcing the Six Shortlisted Innovations:

**EcoCrop:**

Climate-smart irrigation for resilient crops.

**AgriConnect:**

Mobile app linking farmers to markets.

**MechaFarm:**

Small-scale mechanized tools for labor reduction.

**HarvestGuard:**

Post-harvest loss prevention system.

**GreenCycle:**

Repurposing agricultural waste.

**FarmEdu:**

Digital platform for agricultural training.



*The Tech and Innovation Summit has given us the platform to bring our ideas to life. Our solution, EcoCrop, aims to empower farmers with sustainable irrigation technology, enhancing their productivity and resilience against climate change.*

*A participant from the summit*



***This administration's vision to nurture and create a thriving economy has been anchored in His Excellency's bold vision for Sierra Leone.***

**Salima Bah,**  
Minister of Communication,  
Technology and Innovation



# BUILDING A RESILIENT ECOSYSTEM FOR CONTENT CREATORS

As our world becomes more digitally connected, building strong support systems for content creators is essential. At the 2024 Sierra Leone Innovates Tech Summit, one session really stood out: “Creative Economy: Building a Resilient Ecosystem for Content Creators.” Led by Uche Pedro, CEO and Founder of Bella Naija, this session provided a space for content creators to showcase their work and discuss ways to tap into new economic opportunities. With the creative economy on the rise, sessions like this are vital for helping creators succeed.

On the first day, in a room filled with eager participants, people from all walks of life gathered to discuss the ever-changing world of content creation. The session was interactive, encouraging everyone to share their experiences and challenges.

A major focus was on how digital platforms are shaping the future of content creation. The discussion covered various ways to support creators, with a strong emphasis on the importance of protecting creative work through intellectual property rights. This topic was especially relevant today, where content can be easily shared or misused online.

The conversation also looked at the gap between traditional and modern media. Participants discussed how creators can bridge this gap by combining the strengths of both to reach wider audiences and have a greater impact. They also tackled shared challenges like the spread of misinformation, giving everyone a clearer picture of today’s media environment.

The session didn’t just focus on challenges; it also highlighted the economic potential of the creative economy. By showcasing different talents and content, participants were inspired to think about new ways to grow their income. This session will identify how important it is to have sustainable business models that ensure long-term success.

A key takeaway from the session was the need to create business strategies that do more than just make money; they should also contribute to the overall economy. Uche Pedro stressed that this approach is essential for building a strong, resilient creative community that can thrive in the face of challenges.

The gathering for content makers and creative individuals showcased the core values of the 2024 Sierra Leone Innovates Tech Summit. Through the collaboration of people from diverse backgrounds and the encouragement of open dialogue, the summit is shaping a tech-savvy future that promotes both innovation and economic development.



*This session wasn’t just about the here and now—it was about setting the stage for the future. By focusing on protecting our creative work, we’re securing our own futures and adding value to the entire creative economy,*

*Participants reaction to the breakout session*



# CREATIVE ECONOMY: BUILDING A RESILIENT ECOSYSTEM FOR MUSIC ENTERTAINERS

At the 2024 Sierra Leone Innovates Tech Summit, a session titled “Creative Economy: Building a Resilient Ecosystem for Music Entertainers” brought together artists, producers, and managers to discuss strategies for thriving in today’s digital world. Led by industry experts Kate Krontiris, Co-Founder of Telem, Uncommon Sounds, and Rebecca Sarah Jawara from African Leadership University, the session offered practical advice on how music entertainers can effectively use social media and streaming platforms to grow their careers.

The session spotlighted how artists can harness social media to boost their visibility and engage with a wider audience. Participants learned about the impact of viral dance challenges and creative content as tools to enhance their brand and attract more fans.

Economic benefits from digital streaming services were another key topic. The session provided strategies to help artists maximize their earnings and take advantage of global platforms. Attendees also looked into how digital advancements are reshaping the music industry, offering new opportunities for growth.

Challenges in the digital age, such as copyright issues, fair compensation, and navigating complex platforms, were openly discussed. The session highlighted the need for reforms that create a fairer and more supportive environment for artists.

Entrepreneurship emerged as an important theme. This session emphasized the importance of artists developing business skills to manage their careers effectively. Topics like branding, marketing, and financial management were addressed, offering artists practical tools to succeed in the competitive music industry.

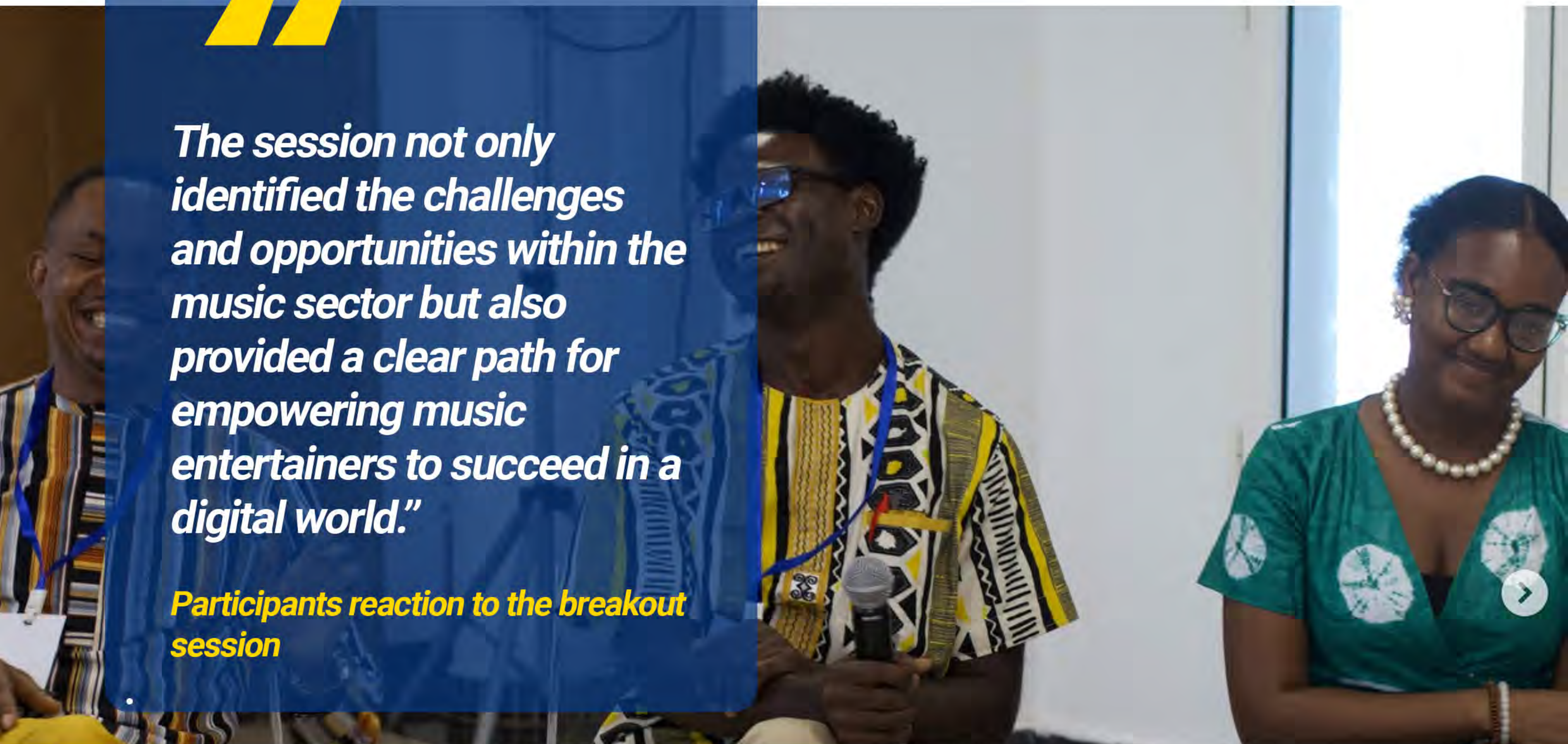
By the end of the session, attendees learned different strategies to improve their careers. The main focus was on creating a supportive atmosphere that promotes creativity and defends the rights of artists. This approach highlights the role of the music industry in driving economic growth, preserving culture, and enhancing Sierra Leone’s international presence.

The Sierra Leone Innovates Tech Summit continues to promote innovation and collaboration, setting a positive course for the future of the creative industries. The Ministry remains dedicated to building an environment where technology and creativity work together to drive sustainable growth and global impact.



*The session not only identified the challenges and opportunities within the music sector but also provided a clear path for empowering music entertainers to succeed in a digital world.”*

*Participants reaction to the breakout session*



# MINISTER'S WELCOME ADDRESS AT THE SIERRA LEONE TECH SUMMIT

I welcome you all to this first-of-its-kind Sierra Leone Tech Summit. I stand before you with immense pride and excitement as we host a tech summit of this magnitude for the very first time in Sierra Leone. In a world where rapid advancements in technology are transforming and reshaping all facets of society, every government must be prepared to meet and leverage the growing demands and opportunities of this new digital age. In line with His Excellency, the President, Rtd. Brig. Julius Maada Bio's vision is to establish Sierra Leone as a leader in the global digital economy.

Today, we mark another significant milestone in this journey. Over the next three days, we will bring together all relevant players in the tech ecosystem, including government policymakers, private sector stakeholders, international development partners, tech financiers, and thought leaders. Our objective is to create a platform where the brightest and most creative minds in Sierra Leone can come together to share ideas, collaborate, and explore opportunities.

We aim to develop a dynamic and interconnected ecosystem that nurtures technological growth and adoption. We must increase digital inclusion through infrastructure development, enhance digital literacy through education, and empower our amazing youth to access global employment opportunities.

These and more are central to our vision to promote a culture of creativity and ingenuity. As a government, we are engaging with the private industry to gain valuable insights into the needs and challenges faced by businesses and innovators. This understanding is essential for driving enabling policies, regulations, and legislation. We will listen, we will collaborate, and we will execute together.

***“Our mission is to build an enabling entrepreneurship ecosystem. This is anchored on the core principles to attract, to thrive, and to retain. On attract, we aim to establish Sierra Leone as a hub for technology and innovation ventures, showcasing abundant opportunities and a conducive environment for business growth.”***

Today, we welcome over 100 international delegates from 15 different countries, ranging from as far as Vietnam and Kazakhstan to our neighboring brothers in Nigeria and Ghana. This is a demonstration of our determination to position Sierra Leone as an attractive nation to incubate and accelerate. On Thrive, we aim to foster a dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem through proactive policies and robust mechanisms that empower businesses to scale and meet evolving market dynamics



# MINISTER'S WELCOME ADDRESS AT THE SIERRA LEONE TECH SUMMIT

"In this conference, we will sit with ecosystem players to review the policies and regulations needed for growth. We want innovative ideas to develop, but more importantly, we want them to grow. We aspire to be on the path to creating the first Sierra Leonean unicorn tech company.

We don't just want to grow; we want to stay and enjoy Sierra Leone as a whole. We aim to cultivate a nurturing environment that encourages long-term commitment and investment, ensuring sustainability and success for businesses operating in Sierra Leone's innovation landscape."

Through continued engagement, capacity building, and initiatives, we seek to promote a sense of belonging and ownership among stakeholders, driving retention and promoting a vibrant ecosystem of innovation and prosperity.

***"This administration's vision to nurture and create a thriving economy has been anchored in His Excellency's bold vision for Sierra Leone."***

***"When I first pitched the idea of creating a tech city in Sierra Leone to His Excellency, what struck me was his unflinching support: "Why haven't we? Why not? We should have done this long ago." That has been my marching order.***

***"We must dream big; there are no limitations; there is no ceiling to where we can stand, and that has been my guiding star. His Excellency's vision to position Sierra Leone, regardless of our size, among global leaders in technology has led to the unveiling of our Felel Tech City project initiative today."***

We have made significant progress within the technology landscape in the country. These successes are very important to us and our people, especially in a country where over 40% of the population is under the age of 15. Technology will consistently play a role in meeting our demographic dividend potential. We believe that in the next 10 years, Sierra Leone will look back on this day as the moment it took a bold step towards digital economic leadership on the continent by focusing on education, infrastructure development, innovation, and entrepreneurship.





2024 SIERRA LEONE INNOVATES - TECH SUMMIT



# KEY HIGHLIGHTS ON PANEL DISCUSSION AT THE SIERRA LEONE INNOVATES TECH SUMMIT



## Government Policies and Global Partnerships Shaping Sierra Leone's Tech and Innovation Landscape

At the inaugural Sierra Leone Innovates Tech Summit, one of the focuses was on how government policies and global partnerships are molding technology and innovation in the country. Key players in the industry gathered to discuss their collaborative efforts driving technological advancements in Sierra Leone.

Moderated by Uche Pedro, Founder and CEO of Bella Naija, Nigeria, the panel featured Dr. David Moinina Sengeh, Chief Minister of Sierra Leone; Rudolf Shwenk, UNICEF Representative in Sierra Leone; Frederick Ampiah, UNDP Resident Representative in Sierra Leone; and Abdu Muwonge, World Bank Country Manager for Sierra Leone. The event, held in the main auditorium before an audience of over 700+ students and professionals from various sectors, provided a comprehensive look at the policies and strategies central to the nation's digital future.

Uche Pedro began by framing the discussion around the role of government policies in promoting an environment where technology can thrive. She highlighted programs like these on how the government is setting the stage for innovation while also ensuring that these advancements reach every corner of society.

The panelists subsequently converse on how their organizations are aiding Sierra Leone in reaching its technology and innovation targets. Chief Minister David Moinina Sengeh stressed during his presentation the government's key policies, emphasizing the programs that have stimulated economic development. He contends that technology will be the engine for progress in a digitally inclusive community, showcasing his determination for technology as the Chief Innovation Officer at Sierra Leone's Directorate of Science, Technology, and Innovation.

Rudolf Shwenk from UNICEF and Frederick Ampiah from UNDP spoke about the essential role of international partnerships in this journey. Their comments indicated the importance of these partnerships in creating sustainable, long-term impact.

Representing the World Bank, Abdu Muwonge discussed the financial and technical support that has been instrumental in launching key projects aimed at transforming Sierra Leone's digital landscape.

The dialogue at the Sierra Leone Innovates Tech Summit sets a promising tone for the country's digital transformation, showing that when policies and partnerships align, the potential for growth is limitless.



## Government and private sector synergy in pre-seed financing

On the second day of the 2024 Sierra Leone Innovates Tech Summit, a panel discussion on government and private sector synergy in pre-seed financing took place at the main auditorium at Bintumani Conference Center in Freetown. This session, moderated by Dr. Kadijatu Grace Ahene, Deputy Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, brought together key figures from both the public and private sectors to explore how they can collaborate to enhance pre-seed financing for startups. The panelists included Dr. Ibrahim Stevens, Governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone; Chidozie Arinze, Director of Government Engagement West Africa at Visa International; and Colin Ogoo, Founder of the Christex Foundation.

The discussion opened with an examination of how public-private partnerships can be leveraged to streamline and improve access to early-stage funding for startups, particularly through the adoption of financial technology. Dr. Stevens provided an overview of the policies currently being implemented by the Bank of Sierra Leone to contribute to a more conducive environment for pre-seed financing. He reinforces the role that the private sector can play in supporting these efforts, ascentuating the importance of collaboration to drive meaningful progress.

A part of the dialogue centered on the challenges faced by venture capital firms in investing at the pre-seed stage. The panelists discussed the barriers that currently hinder such investments and explored how government support can play a crucial role in mitigating these obstacles. The panelists agreed that for these contributions to be maximized, the government must take proactive steps to create an enabling environment that facilitates greater private sector participation.

This panel discussion was particularly timely, given the growing recognition of the challenges that early-stage startups in Sierra Leone face in securing the necessary funding to launch and scale their ventures.

In closing, the session emphasized the importance of ongoing collaboration between the government and private sector in establishing a sturdy foundation for startup funding. The panelists' vision highlighted the need for effective regulatory frameworks and policies from the Bank of Sierra Leone, as well as the role of financial technology in bridging gaps and enhancing the efficiency of the pre-seed financing process with contributions from large companies and venture capital firms to the ecosystem. There was also a clear call for more structured government support to address the challenges that remain.



## Regulatory Pathways in Shaping an Innovation-Friendly Environment in Sierra Leone

A dynamic innovation ecosystem is being built in Sierra Leone, but it faces challenges in crafting regulations that will actually support its growth. The country is gradually emerging as a potential hub for technological advancement and entrepreneurship in West Africa. However, the path to a thriving innovation landscape requires not just visionary ideas but also a regulatory framework that can support and sustain these innovations.

The recent 2024 Sierra Leone Innovates Tech Summit brought this into sharp focus with a panel discussion titled "Regulatory Pathways: Shaping an Innovation-Friendly Environment in Sierra Leone." Held at the main auditorium at Bintumani Conference Center in Freetown.

The session featured influential voices from various sectors, including the Chief Executive Officer of Innovation Sierra Leone, the Founder and Creative Director of Creative Hub Africa, the Founder and CEO of Life-by-Design Group, the Team Lead of Invest Salone, and the Managing Partner of DigitA. Their goal was to explore how regulatory reforms could better support technological growth, entrepreneurial ventures, and economic development in the country.

The conversation focused on the role of regulatory reforms in driving economic growth. Panelists agreed that regulations designed to attract investment are vital for scaling innovation, with discussions on the role of support organizations and acceleration programs that help startups navigate the regulatory maze, emphasizing that these resources are important for a thriving tech scene.

Moreover, the panel addressed the practical challenges that new businesses face, such as securing funding and navigating regulatory approvals. The need for more comprehensive support systems and acceleration programs like the tech summit was highlighted as important for helping entrepreneurs through the early stages of their ventures.

As the session concluded, the panelists shared practical recommendations for policymakers. They advocated for a collaborative approach to regulatory reform, suggesting that a combined effort from the government, private sector, and civil society is essential to crafting a supportive and efficient regulatory framework. By implementing thoughtful reforms that cater to the needs of tech startups, creative enterprises, and investors, Sierra Leone can strengthen its position as a leading innovation hub in West Africa, paving the way for sustained economic growth and development.



## Smart mining and building capacity for Sierra Leone's future

Sierra Leone's mining sector, a key pillar of its economy, is all set for a transformation as it embraces smart mining technologies. This sector, vital for the nation's GDP, employment, and export revenues, must adapt to evolving technologies to remain competitive and sustainable.

At the recent 2024 Sierra Leone Innovates Tech Summit, a panel discussion titled "Smart Mining and Building Capacity to Meet Future Requirements" shed light on this critical transition. Held in Freetown, the session brought together influential figures, including the Minister of Mines and Mineral Resources, Mr. Julius Mattai, the Technical Services Manager at Sierra Rutile, Grant, Scott, and the Head of Mining Engineering at Fourah Bay College, Solomon Tucker.

The topic of discussion centered on the promise of smart mining, which leverages technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), and automation to revolutionize the industry. These innovations can enhance operational efficiency, improve safety, and promote environmental sustainability. For Sierra Leone, adopting these technologies means better resource management and a reduced environmental footprint.

However, embracing smart mining comes with challenges. The panelists called for the need for updated policies and regulatory frameworks to support this technological shift.

Effective regulations are important for creating an environment where smart mining can thrive and contribute to the sector's growth.

Infrastructure development also emerged as a key focus. The panel discussed the importance of collaborative efforts between the government and private sector to build the necessary infrastructure, such as reliable power, efficient transportation, and effective water management systems. These developments are essential for the successful implementation of smart mining technologies.

Additional discussions addressed the need for capacity building. As the industry evolves, so too must the skills of the local workforce. Panelists spoke strongly about the importance of investing in education and training to prepare the next generation of mining professionals for new technological demands.

The session focused on the need for supportive policies, infrastructure improvements, and capacity building to ensure the sector can adapt and thrive. By addressing these areas, Sierra Leone can set itself on a path to a more efficient, safe, and sustainable mining future.



# BREAKING BARRIERS: WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY LEADING THE CHARGE FOR CHANGE



The technology landscape is evolving, and women are leading the way in this transformation. The 2024 Sierra Leone Innovative Tech Summit held a session on Day Three on the topic, "Women in Technology: Navigating the Path to Success." This session brought together a full room of both women and men, showcasing visible examples of women making remarkable progress in the tech industry. Held in Freetown and moderated by Mariama Barrie, Manager

of Food and Agriculture at the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, the event featured a dynamic panel of trailblazing women who are reshaping the tech landscape in Sierra Leone and beyond.

This session, which attracted a diverse audience of aspiring tech professionals, entrepreneurs, and industry leaders, focused on the contributions women have made in technology and the countless opportunities available for women in Sierra Leone. The panel featured Kaprece James, President and Chief Executive Officer of Stella Girls; Salwa Campbell, Co-Founder and Director of Business Development at Fix Solutions; Adaora Ikenze, Director of Public Policy for Anglophone West Africa at Meta; and Hawa Yokie, CEO and Co-Founder of Kamara Yokie Innovation Center.

Sharing her experiences in creating a space for young students to innovate and collaborate, Hawa Yokie, CEO and Co-Founder of the Kamara Yokie Innovation Center, explained, "Our center provides resources and training to assist students in turning their tech ideas into reality. We are building a community where we can learn, collaborate, and drive technological advancement." Hawa Yokie's work exemplifies the importance of dedicated spaces for young people to develop their skills and ideas in robotics and other tech fields in Sierra Leone.

Kaprece James took the stage first, sharing her journey and the mission of Stella Girls, an organization dedicated to empowering young women through education and leadership in technology. **"Our goal is to provide mentorship and support to young women, helping them navigate the challenges of the tech industry and succeed in their careers,"** James stated. Her emphasis on mentorship resonated deeply with the audience, highlighting the critical role of guidance in showcasing the next generation of female tech leaders.

Mariama Barrie, the events moderator, emphasized the collective effort required to support women in technology. "Creating spaces for women to learn, grow, and lead in tech is essential. Our progress depends on the collaborative efforts of the entire community," Barrie concluded.

As a co-founder of Fix Solutions, Salwa Campbell spoke passionately about innovation and entrepreneurship. Campbell has been instrumental in helping tech startups scale and succeed.

The session also presented the different opportunities available for women in technology in Sierra Leone. From coding boot camps and tech workshops to scholarships and internships, the support system for women in tech is expanding. The panelists are seasoned women in tech who have trained and mentored many young professionals into the tech field. They encouraged women and girls in the room to seize these opportunities and continue pushing boundaries.

Adaora Ikenze, representing Meta, addressed the importance of policy and advocacy in promoting women's participation in technology. "At Meta, we are committed to creating inclusive environments where women can thrive in tech roles," Ikenze explained. Her focus on policy highlighted the need for systemic change to ensure women have equal opportunities in the tech industry.



**Women in Sierra Leone are making incredible strides in tech entrepreneurship. We're creating solutions to local problems and driving innovation,**

**Salwa Campbell**  
**Fix Solutions**

## Addressing Startup Financing and Revenue Growth

The Ministry of Communications Technology and Innovation organized the Sierra Leone Innovates Tech Summit, featuring a panel discussion on “Access to Finance & Tech Startup Revenue Raising.” The session aimed to guide tech startups through the complexities of the investment landscape, from seed funding to Series C rounds. Panelists included prominent figures such as Sebastian Ashong-Katai, managing director of Ecobank Sierra Leone, and Davidson Oturu, managing partner at Nubia Capital in Nigeria.

During the discussion, panelists provided examples of investor expectations at various funding stages, highlighting what angel investors, venture capitalists, and institutional investors look for in startups. They discussed the importance of developing tech ideas into viable products, with advice on market analysis, MVP (minimum viable product) development, and scaling business models effectively.

The session also offered practical tips on pitching to investors, focusing on the clarity and impact of presentations as well as accurate financial projections. Panelists shared strategies on crafting compelling pitches that resonate with potential investors, helping startups secure the funding necessary for growth and expansion.

This panel detailed the essential steps that tech startups can take to attract and secure investment, including networking, participation in accelerator programs, and utilization of government and private sector grants. It concluded with a call for continued discussion and collaboration among participants, underscoring the critical role of a well-connected tech ecosystem in promoting innovation and growth in Sierra Leone.



## Transforming Government Service Delivery

The Sierra Leone Innovates Tech Summit, organized by the Ministry of Communications Technology and Innovation, spotlighted a key panel discussion on “Transforming Government Service Delivery.” The session brought together top government officials and experts to discuss how technological advancements can revolutionize public services in Sierra Leone. Panelists included the Minister of Public Administration and Political Affairs, Amara Kallon; the Director General of the National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA), Mohamed Massaquoi; the Director of the Directorate of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI), Abdul Malik Tejan-Sie; and the Minister of Public Administration and Political Affairs, Amara Kallon.

The current opportunities for enhancing government service delivery, emphasizing the role of technology in improving efficiency, transparency, and accessibility, was discussed. Panelists shared perspectives on implementing e-government solutions, digital identity systems, and data analytics to streamline administrative processes and improve public engagement. Case studies of successful digital transformation projects within the government were also presented, offering relevant lessons and best practices for future projects.

The primary theme of this discussion was the importance of partnership-focused efforts and partnerships. The panelists made it clear that innovation in government service delivery requires strong collaboration between government agencies, private sector partners, and international development organizations. This unified approach is important for driving the adoption of innovative technologies that can significantly improve public services.

As a final point, the session called for administrative reforms and the integration of cutting-edge technologies to enhance public service delivery in Sierra Leone. The contributors recommended that the government continue to build on successful digital projects and promote partnerships that can support the nation’s digital transformation journey.



## Infrastructure’s Crucial Role in Tech Growth and Entrepreneurship Examined at the Sierra Leone Summit

At the Sierra Leone Innovates Tech Summit, a panel discussion titled “Infrastructure as a Critical Pillar to Foster Innovation and Entrepreneurship” brought together experts to discuss the foundational role of infrastructure in supporting tech innovation and economic growth. The session, organized by the Ministry of Communications Technology and Innovation, featured different perspectives from panelists such as Nyakeh Yormah, Director of Communication at the Ministry, and Nnenna Idebisi, Strategic Government Lead for West Africa at Amazon Web Services (AWS).

The panelists noted the importance of reliable internet connectivity, a consistent power supply, and advanced hosting and storage solutions as essential components for promoting a thriving tech ecosystem. They discussed the current state of internet infrastructure in Sierra Leone, highlighting both progress and challenges, and outlined future plans for expansion and improvement. The need for strong cybersecurity measures was also discussed as critical for protecting digital infrastructure and building trust in technology.

Furthermore, panelists addressed the role of modern devices and hardware in enabling technological development, with panelists advocating for greater access to these resources to support scalable tech ventures. The different points provided by experts from MoCTI, Meta and PAVE showed the necessity of a comprehensive approach to infrastructure development, one that includes strong public-private partnerships and collaboration with international stakeholders.

The session identified the important role that infrastructure plays in driving innovation and entrepreneurship in Sierra Leone. There is a need for continued efforts to address infrastructure challenges, emphasizing the importance of a collaborative approach to ensuring a conducive environment for technological development and sustainable economic growth in Sierra Leone, which will make it the hub of innovation and entrepreneurship in the region.



## ICT Ministers Discuss Government’s Role in Promoting Emerging Technologies

The Sierra Leone Innovates Tech Summit drew attention to a ministerial panel on “The Role of Government in Building a Conducive Environment to Promote Emerging Technologies.” The session, organized by the Ministry of Communications Technology and Innovation, brought together information communication and technology ministers from Sierra Leone, Gambia, and Kazakhstan to discuss how governments can create environments that accelerate the development and adoption of emerging technologies.

Members of the panel included Madam Salima Monorma Bah, Minister for Communications, Technology, and Innovation, and Hon. Ousman Bah, Minister of Communications and Digital Economy in Gambia, discussed essential policy frameworks and regulatory measures to support technological development. During the session, they discussed the importance of public-private partnerships in developing digital infrastructure that supports emerging technologies and the role that public-private partnerships play in promoting innovation.

Minister Salima Monorma Bah, Hon. Ousman Bah of Gambia, and Vice Minister Askar Zhambakin of Kazakhstan shared their perspectives on the importance of establishing strong policy frameworks that support technological growth. They maintained that well-structured regulations are essential for promoting innovation while also ensuring that emerging technologies address societal challenges and contribute to economic development.

The panel also covered strategies for building technical skills and capabilities within the workforce to meet future technology demands. Askar Zhambakin, Vice Minister of Digital Development, Innovations and Aerospace Industry in Kazakhstan, mentioned the need for effective investment and funding sources for tech startups and innovation projects to drive progress.

The panelists shed light on the importance of public-private partnerships in promoting innovation, noting that collaboration between governments, the private sector, and academia is vital for creating a thriving technology ecosystem and the need for digital infrastructure development, investment in capacity building, and ensuring that the workforce is equipped with the necessary skills to meet the demands of future technologies.

The ministers committed to enhancing their countries’ technology ecosystems through collaborative efforts and shared responsibilities. They emphasized the importance of continued investment in digital infrastructure and capacity building as key pillars for driving the digital transformation agenda across the African continent.



# KEY HIGHLIGHTS



## Starlink

The launch of Starlink in Sierra Leone by Ryan Goodnight, Director Global Lincensing & Market activation on day one of the 2024 Sierra Leone Innovates: Tech Summit. Sierra Leone marks the 100th country, territory or other market around the world where Starlink's high-speed, low-latency internet is available.



## Felei Tech City

The launch of the Felei Tech City in Tikonko, Bo District by His Excellency Retired Brigadiere Dr. Julius Maada Bio on day one of the summit. This project aimed at creating a hub for technological innovation and entrepreneurship, promoting an environment where tech startups can thrive.



## Digital Transformation Projects

The launch of the Felei Tech City in Tikonko, Bo District by His Excellency Retired Brigadiere Dr. Julius Maada Bio on day one of the summit. This project aimed at creating a hub for technological innovation and entrepreneurship, promoting an environment where tech startups can thrive.



## The National Fiber Backbone 2 (NFB2)

The National Fiber Backbone 2 (NFB2) project is set to transform Sierra Leone's digital landscape, enhancing the telecommunication sector across three districts, including key cities like Lungi, Lunsar, Makeni, and Koidu. Spanning 372 km, this phase lays the groundwork for a National Digital Highway.

Building on NFB1's success, NFB2 extends the network to Kailahun, Pujehun, Moyamba, and Moriba Town in Rutile, covering 20 cities and 630 km. This project connects urban centers and rural communities, deploying metro fiber in Bo, Kenema, and Makeni to link government offices, schools, and hospitals to high-speed broadband, ensuring comprehensive internet access nationwide.

# PRESIDENTIAL TOUR DURING THE TECH SUMMIT





MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION,  
TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

# 2024 SIERRA LEONE INNOVATES TECH SUMMIT



MOCTI HOSTS DPG  
MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLE  
TO DRIVE DIGITAL  
TRANSFORMATION  
IN AFRICA

On the third day of the 2024 Sierra Leone Innovates Tech Summit, the Ministry of Communication Technology and Innovation (MoCTI) hosted the Digital Public Goods (DPG) Ministerial Roundtable. The event aimed to support cross-border collaboration, reduce duplicated efforts, optimize resources, and accelerate digital transformation across Africa.

This session, moderated by Joel Ogunsola, Founder, Prudedge, Nigeria, brought together government ministers, policymakers, and development partners. Among them were the Minister Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources, Julius Mattai Grant Scott, Technical Service Manager, Sierra Rutile, Solomon Tucker, Head of Department, Mining Engineering Department, Fourah Bay College, who came together to discuss how open-source technology can enhance public service delivery.

The session opened with an examination of the positive impact open-source technology has on public services. Participants explored how these technologies can improve efficiency, accessibility and transparency in government services, laying the groundwork for sustainable development. A major focus of the session was identifying challenges and exchanging best practices in building digital infrastructure for public goods. Representatives from various countries shared their experiences and solutions, creating a collaborative atmosphere aimed at addressing common issues such as infrastructure gaps, digital literacy challenges, and funding limitations.

One of the key topics was the creation of a framework for an African blueprint to promote and adopt digital public goods. This framework seeks to harmonize efforts across the continent, ensuring that digital solutions are scalable and tailored to the specific needs of African nations. The session consistently highlighted the importance of inclusive development and sustainable digital strategies.

Minister Julius Mattai explained Sierra Leone's national strategies, which align with the proposed continental blueprint. He emphasized regulatory frameworks that support innovation while protecting data privacy and security, offering valuable insights into the different approaches being taken to advance digital public goods. Development partners and observers also shared global best practices and collaborative vision that could be adapted to strengthen Africa's digital ecosystem. Their input underscored the importance of international cooperation and knowledge sharing in driving the continent's digital transformation.

The roundtable concluded with a set of actionable outcomes aimed at advancing the collective digital agenda.

Participants committed to strengthening regional cooperation, leveraging open-source technologies, and prioritizing capacity-building initiatives.

They agreed on the need to foster an environment that supports innovation and entrepreneurship in the digital realm.



The outcomes of the DPG Ministerial Roundtable are expected to drive significant progress in Africa's digital landscape. By harmonizing efforts and pooling resources, African nations are better positioned to accelerate their journey toward inclusive digital transformation. Sierra Leone's role as a leader in SMART Africa's vision of using technology for sustainable development was reaffirmed through this event, demonstrating its commitment to a future where technology drives positive change and inclusive growth.

# BOOTHS SHOWCASE AT THE SUMMIT



# DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

## UNICEF



Thank you to UNICEF and Rudolf Schwenk, the UN Representative in Sierra Leone, for sponsoring and actively participating in panels and breakout sessions during the 2024 Sierra Leone Innovates: Tech Summit. Your contributions to the panels and breakout session topics on Digital Public Goods (DPGs), Access to Finance, and Government Policies were essential in shaping Sierra Leone's future.

UNICEF, through its partnership with the Government of Sierra Leone, donated 113 laptops and 23 projectors costing USD 113k to the Ministry of Communication, Technology and Innovation in support of the Digital Learning Hubs and GIGA project-related activities. This falls under the umbrella of the President's "Big Five Agenda," reflecting a collective commitment to advancing education, technology, and youth empowerment in Sierra Leone.



### About UNICEF:

UNICEF promotes the rights and well-being of every child in everything they do. Together with their partners, they work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children everywhere.

For more information about UNICEF and its work for children, visit [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org).

## UNDP



Thanks to UNDP, over 1,500 university students from across Sierra Leone, including both provincial areas and Freetown, attended the Tech Summit. We appreciate the participation of UNDP Country Representative, Frederick Ampiah, in the panel discussion on Government Policies and Global Partnerships Shaping Sierra Leone's Tech and Innovation Landscape.

### About UNDP:

As the lead United Nations agency on international development, UNDP works in 170 countries and territories to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality. They help countries develop policies, leadership skills, partnerships and institutional capabilities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Their work is centred around six core development areas, known as our signature solutions: poverty and inequality, governance, resilience, environment, energy and gender equality.

## World Bank



His Excellency, Brigadier Retired Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, officially launched the \$50 million Sierra Leone Digital Transformation Project during the opening of the 2024 Sierra Leone Innovates: Tech Summit.

The ministry of communication, Technology and innovation is grateful to the World Bank for their committed support in developing the critical infrastructures for innovation: connectivity, digital Skills and digital services. This project will transform the digital architecture that will ultimately promote innovation and entrepreneurship.

Thank you for the support in facilitating the 2024 Sierra Leone Innovates Summit. The contribution and call to action from the country representative, Mr. Abdu Muwonge, were inspiring.

### About World Bank:

The World Bank Group works in every major area of development. They provide a wide array of financial products and technical assistance and help countries share and apply innovative knowledge and solutions to the challenges they face.



● ● ——— ● ●

# NINE PARTNERSHIPS SIGNED WITH MOCTI AT THE SUMMIT



2. A memorandum of understanding with **Christex Foundation** to facilitate strategic collaboration and partner on mutually agreed areas of corporation, particularly on developing blockchain technology and digital governance solutions.



A Memorandum of Understanding with **Famerline** to ensure the successful implementation of the pre-challenge activities aimed at developing a comprehensive and special Large Language Model (LLM) along with automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) and Text to Speech (TTS) models for Sierra Leone's agricultural sector in alignment with the national agricultural goals on the Feed Salone Programme.



In recognition of his expertise and commitment to advancing the use of artificial intelligence for educational and personal development, **Mr. Igor Silberud** is hereby granted the authority to lead the development and implementation of AI-driven solutions, engage with local and international partners, and advise on relevant policies and regulations.



The Ministry signed a Memorandum of Understanding with **Arch Design** to create the architectural design and topographic survey for the Tech and Innovation City in Tikonko Chiefdom, Bo District. Through this partnership, a cutting-edge hub will be built to drive tech and innovation in Sierra Leone.



A memorandum of understanding with **Orange Sierra Leone** to launch and construct the Orange Village Community project in Sierra Leone. The village will comprise a local health center, a community primary school, a community market and a water supply facility in Felei city, in Tikonko village, Bo district.



A Memorandum of Understanding with **Africell Sierra Leone** to construct, develop and operate a data center in the Felei tech city in Tikonko Chiefdom, Bo district, at the southern region of the Republic of Sierra Leone.



The Ministry of Communication, Technology and Innovation signed a memorandum of understanding with **Limkokwing University of Creative Technology** to implement the Sierra Leone Remote Work Rediness Program, empowering graduates for remote jobs and supporting the government's \$500,000 job creation goal.



The Ministry of Communication, Technology and Innovation signed an MOU with the **National Information Technologies Joint-Stock Company** to grant the Ministry nonexclusive proprietary rights for the Unified Platform of Internet Resources Information System.



The Ministry of Communication, Technology and Innovation signed a Memorandum of Understanding with **Aura Network Limited** to leverage blockchain technology in enhancing Sierra Leone's digital economy through blockchain adoption, driving innovation and transparency across various sectors.



SIERRA LEONE INNOVATES

AGRICULTURE INNOVATION CHALLENGE  
**H.E. PRESIDENT BIO INNOVATION AWARD**  
PAY AUTO SMART IRRIGATION  
SUM **\$30,000** GRAND PRIZE WINNER  
DATE 13TH JUNE 2024

AGRICULTURE INNOVATION CHALLENGE  
PAY ECO-FRIENDLY  
SUM **\$20,000**  
DATE 13TH JUNE 2024

SIERRA LEONE INNOVATES  
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

# SIERRA LEONE'S FIRST NATIONAL TECH SUMMIT: A SPOTLIGHT ON AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION

The First National Tech Summit in Sierra Leone, organized by the Ministry of Communication, Technology and Innovation, concluded with great success, featuring the Agriculture Innovation Challenge aimed at empowering youth to create tech solutions for the agricultural sector. This event aligns with His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio's pillar, one of the big five agendas to "Feed Salone," and attracted thirty-two (32) applications across the country presenting innovations in climate-smart agriculture, digital tools, mechanization, waste reduction, and agri-education.

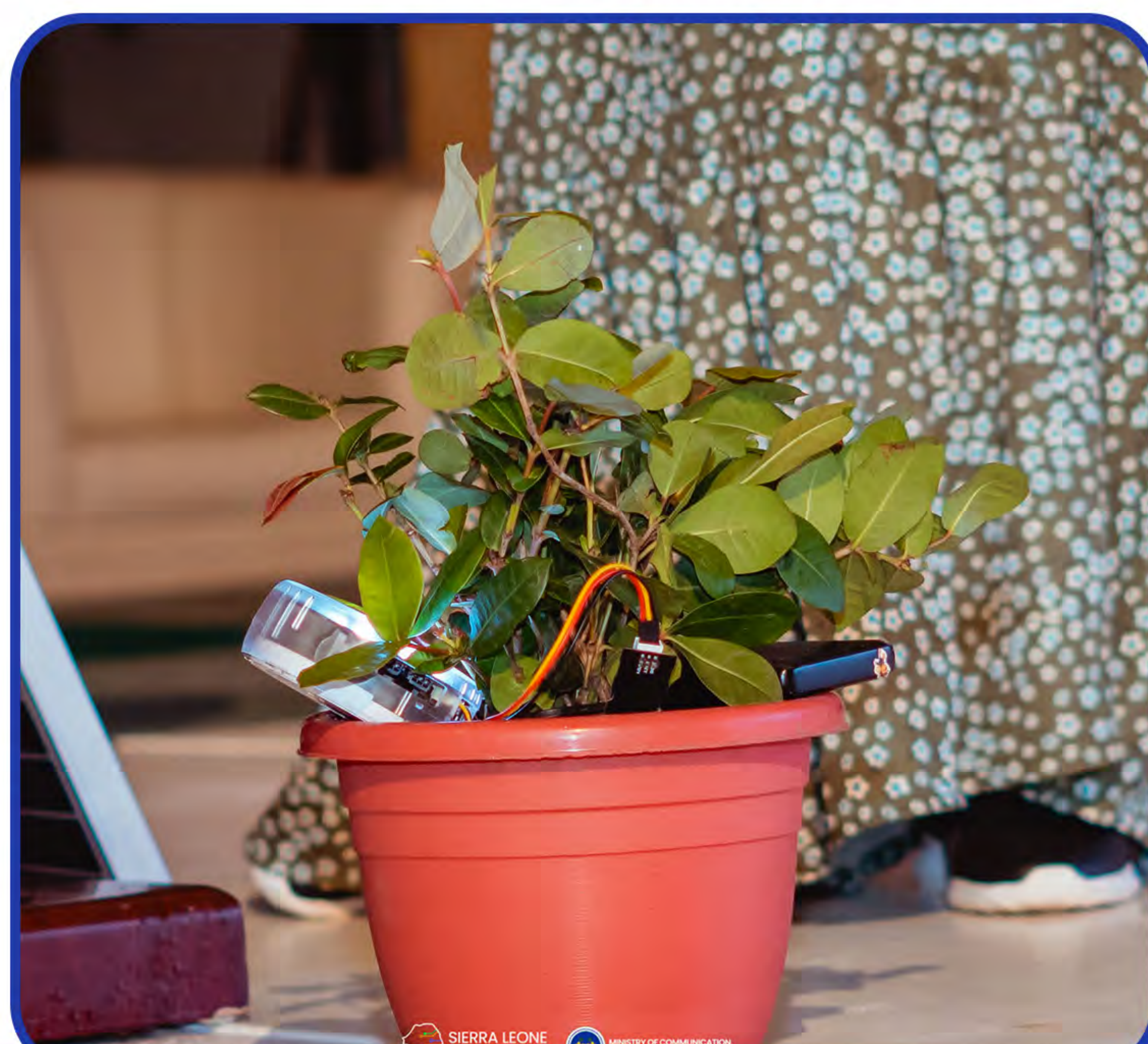


*Today, traditional ways of farming are giving way to smart and innovative farming. As a ministry, we are very deliberate about our support to entrepreneurs across the country. We want the ideas you have dreamt of. We want you to come to fusion and scale; that is why we are giving you all the support necessary.*

**Musa Kpaka**  
**Minister of Agriculture and Food Security**

The challenge focused on themes such as climate-smart agriculture, digital agriculture, mechanization and automation, waste reduction and management, and agri-education. Applicants had to be Sierra Leonean citizens, residing in or out of the country, and could apply as individuals or in teams with a minimum viable product. From the thirty-two (32) responses, six (6) innovative solutions were shortlisted.

The finalists presented their solutions before judges, including Collin Ogoo, founder of Christex Foundation; Fatmata Natasha Kamara, an agroentrepreneur and founder of Natty's Bountiful Farmyard; Ben Hampson, an agrofood expert in Africa and beyond; Haja Myrs, an agribusiness consultant and founder of Estu Delight; and Prof. Abdulai Jalloh, Chief Agriculture Officer, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security. Each participant had five minutes to pitch and two minutes for questions and answers.



01

**Osman Yaah** hails from Kono, representing Auto-Smart Irrigation and Energy, an Orange Social Venture prize winner, leads a team of three in developing an eco-friendly digital irrigation system using solar power and bamboo to help smallholder farmers in Sierra Leone remotely manage irrigation and improve agricultural productivity through a subscription-based model with payments via Orange Money, exemplified by his mother, the first user of this innovative system in the country.

02

**Martin Dambaquee's** Eco-Friendly Rechargeable Incubator Project, developed by a team of three, addresses inadequate electricity supplies by creating incubators that operate through GSM control systems and recharge using renewable energy, providing an environmentally friendly solution that reduces dependence on importation, offers a two-year warranty, and aims to reach all regions of Sierra Leone, exemplified by his recognition with the Impact Award for Generation Africa in Tanzania in 2023.

03

**Miss Kumba Florence Banja's** EDEN project, developed by a team of four, tackles food scarcity and post-harvest issues by locally fabricating dehydrating machines from briquettes made of coconut shells to dehydrate cassava leaves, offering a cost-effective solution that feeds more than ten (10) people per box for NLE20, with a shelf life of up to two years, directly buying from farmers to reduce waste, create jobs, and stimulate business growth.

04

**David Meek Jah**, representing CADAP presented virtually, focuses on improving global food production through human capital and technology by addressing poor technology in agriculture, ensuring access to finance, and developing an ecosystem involving banks, early warning systems for weather, real-time predictive analytics, geotagging, and digital economy infrastructure such as connectivity, power, cloud services, global payment platforms, and satellite technology to provide farmers with real-time aggregate demand data and satellite remote sensing data using CADAP's decision intelligent knowledge graph.

05

**Mr. Abdulai Barrie** from Salon AGrow Market addresses the market access challenge in Sierra Leone by developing a comprehensive marketplace platform that presently connects eighty six (86) farmers with buyers and service providers, allowing users to order locally grown produce from home, register products, and access a dashboard for seamless transactions, aiming to scale up and offer both online and offline access. Through the platform, they aim to provide reliable income for farmers, and are currently offering the service for free while planning future monetization, all managed by a team of four, including him being a Yali Cohort.

06

**Hawanatu Sesay** from We-AgriLAB addresses the issue of low crop yields by using sensors implanted in the soil to collect data on parameters such as humidity and growth, which helps farmers make informed decisions on when to water their crops, with the hardware having a long life and five pilot projects already conducted, earning her the 2023 OSVP TECH Queen title.





# WINNER

Osman

Yaah

Auto-Smart Irrigation

His Excellency President  
Bio Award of **\$30,000.**



# 1ST RUNNERUP

Martin

Dambaquee

Eco-Friendly Rechargeable Incubator

**\$20,000** and additional  
opportunities



# 2ND RUNNERUP

Kumba

Florence Banja

Eden-Agro

**\$10,000** and additional  
opportunities

The Minister of Communication, Technology, and Innovation expressed pride in leading the implementation of the President's vision:



*I think of him as my guiding star. His initial reaction when I first pitched the idea of organizing a tech summit was overwhelmingly supportive. Thanks to the innovators who have been here for three days, showcasing remarkable solutions both on stage and on video.*

**Madam Salima Monorma Bah**  
Minister of Communication, Technology and Innovation

The summit celebrated technological innovation in agriculture and marked a significant milestone in Sierra Leone's journey towards sustainable development and food security.

Ministers of Public Administration and Management, Technical and Higher Education, Information, Civic Education, Youth Affairs, and Agriculture and Food Security, sponsors, partners, the media, alongside university heads, students, and secondary school representatives, were present.



*The Agriculture Innovation Challenge has given us the platform to bring our ideas to life.*

*Our solution, EcoCrop aims to empower farmers with sustainable irrigation technology, enhancing their productivity and resilience against climate change.*

**Fatmata Kamara,**  
Innovator, EcoCrop



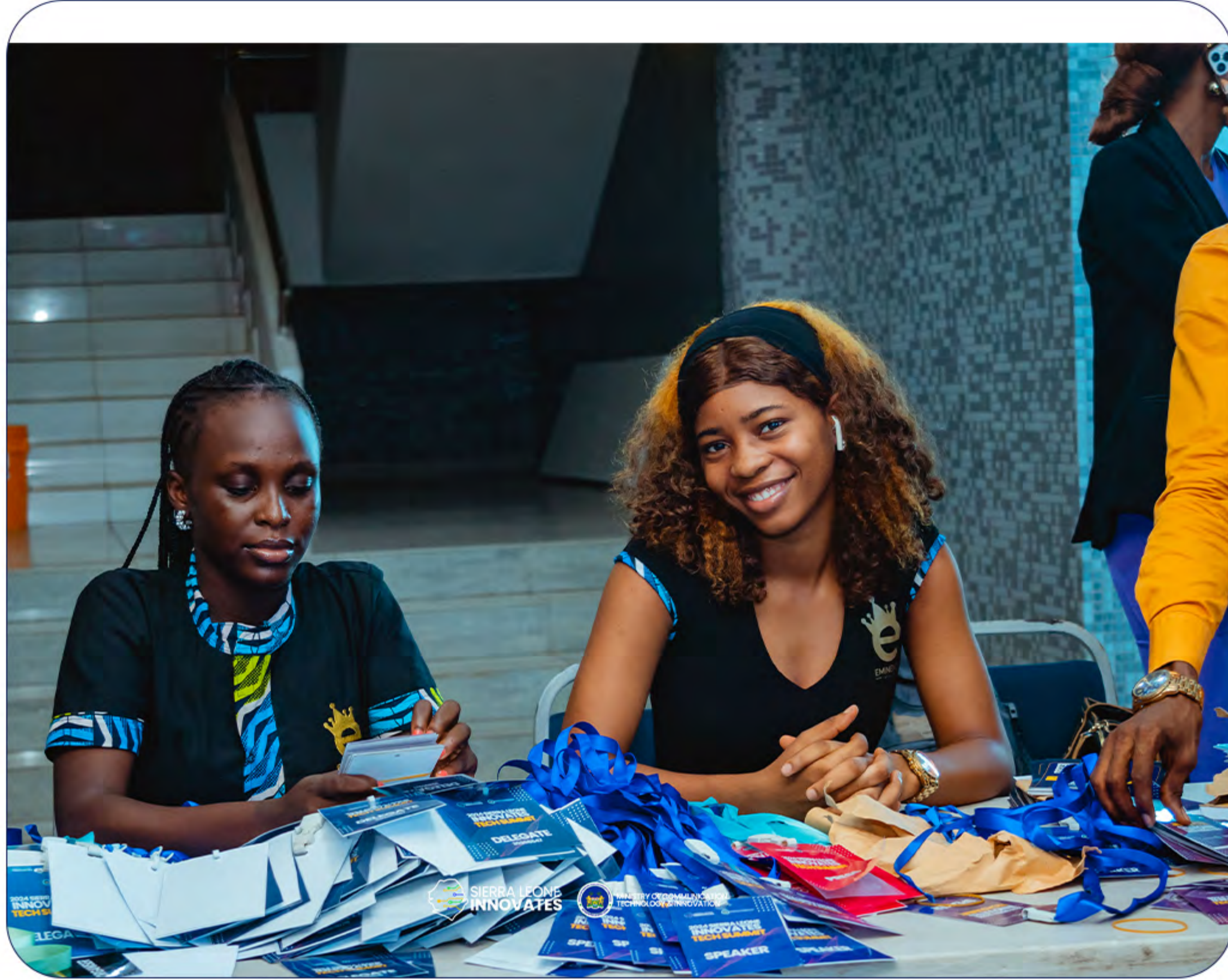
# PHOTO DUMP



# PHOTO DUMP



# PHOTO DUMP





# MoCTI Wins Ministry Excellence Award for June 2024

In June 2024, immediately following the successful Sierra Leone Innovates Tech Summit, the Ministry of Communication, Technology, and Innovation (MoCTI) was honored with the prestigious Ministry Excellence Award. This recognition highlights the best performing ministry of the month, acknowledging MoCTI's outstanding achievements and impact.

Competing against other strong nominees, including the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Information and Civic Education, and the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, MoCTI secured the top spot with an impressive 55.2% of the votes. The Ministry of Civic Education followed with 21.5%, the Ministry of Health and Sanitation with 12.5%, and the Ministry of Trade and Industry with 9.8%.



Under the leadership of Minister Salima Monorma Bah and Deputy Minister Ibrahim Sannoh, MoCTI has consistently demonstrated excellence in promoting digital transformation, driving technological innovation, and enhancing communication infrastructure across Sierra Leone. This award reflects their dedication and the Ministry's continued commitment to leading the nation into a digitally advanced future.



MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION,  
TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

**2024 SIERRA LEONE INNOVATES:  
TECH SUMMIT**

**NEWSLETTER**