

CONSUMERS, SERVICE PROVIDERS, NCA INTERACT AT CONSUMER FORUM IN KUMASI

The National Communications Authority (NCA) has met a cross section of consumers, Operators and other stakeholders at a Consumer Forum in Kumasi. The NCA is mandated by the Electronic Communications Act 775, Section 26 to periodically ascertain public opinion on the performance of Service Providers and Network Operators. The Consumer Forum was held on the theme, “Ensuring a Safe and Secured Telecommunications Environment for the Consumer”. It provided a platform for consumers and Service Providers, especially Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to discuss matters of common interest.

Among the cross section of consumers at the event held at the Prempeh Assembly Hall at Asem in Kumasi were market women, students, drivers, religious groups and security agencies. Other stakeholders at the event were representatives of Mobile Network Operators (MNOs), representatives from Paid-TV Services and the Ghana Chamber of Telecommunications. Also present were representations from sister agencies in the telecommunication space such as the National Identification Authority (NIA), Data Protection Commission (DPC), Cyber Security Authority (CSA), National Information Technology Agency (NITA), Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communications (GIFEC).

In his welcome address, the Director General of the NCA, Mr. Joe Anokye, stated that ‘For the NCA, and indeed the Telecommunications industry, the consumer is an indispensable stakeholder within our industry and his/her concerns must be given audience and addressed accordingly. Without consumers, the telecommunications eco-system cannot function’, he said.

Touching on the ongoing SIM Card Registration Exercise, Mr. Anokye reiterated that digital identification is the means to help Ghana curb



most of the SIM card related challenges. According to him, unregistered SIM cards have contributed immensely to the rise in identity fraud. He, therefore, urged all subscribers to register their SIM cards with their Ghana Cards as the deadline draws near to assist in building a robust ecosystem for the delivery and use of communication services as well as to prevent, investigate, and prosecute associated crimes. Mr. Anokye reminded the public about the set up of an Operational Support Centre solely for Consumers to call, ask questions and submit complaints regarding the SIM Card Registration. He indicated that the Centre runs every day and is equipped with trained staff at the backend who receive consumers’ concerns and inputs for the NCA to work on.

The Minister for Communications and Digitalisation, Hon. Ursula Owusu-Ekuful, in her keynote address expressed the Ministry’s commitment to consumer protection. She noted that in all institutional



Director General of NCA, Mr. Joe Anokye, giving the welcome address



Mr. Isaac Emmil Osei-Bonsu, Jnr. Board Chairman of the NCA giving his remarks

arrangements, the consumer is the focus and the Government's interest is to develop policies that will be implemented by these agencies for the benefit of all Ghanaians.

Hon. Owusu –Ekuful further outlined some of the consumer protection initiatives embarked on by the Government as part of efforts to improve customer experience. Key among them is the National Roaming Service, which allows phones to automatically connect to the Mobile Network with the best Quality of Service available in any area, regardless of which Operator one is primarily subscribed to. This, she noted, has been activated on the rural telephony network dubbed RURALCOM.

The Hon. Minister also stated that as part of the Rural Telephony Project (RTP), 2016 cell sites are being provided across the country to meet the telecom access needs of rural communities in a cost-effective manner by the end of 2023. This will seek to connect about 3.5 million more Ghanaians to mobile telecom networks. She indicated that from the inception of the Project in November 2020 at Atwereboana in the New Edubiase Constituency, 769 sites have been built, out of which 360 are on air (active) and delivering voice and data services to over 120,000 subscribers daily, on the average, across various rural communities, as at May 27, 2022.

In his remarks, the Board Chairman of the NCA, Mr. Isaac Emmil

Osei-Bonsu, Jnr., recognised all stakeholders for the role they each play in the development of the Communications Industry. He further disclosed that the Board of the NCA is working on the establishment of the Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) which will provide an effective avenue for the resolution of disputes as per the Electronic Communications Act, 2008 (Act 775). He added that the public will be sensitised following the establishment of the DRC.

Mr. Osei – Bonsu used the platform to advise consumers to make a conscious effort to read the terms and conditions of any product or service before they subscribe as they wield the power to hold service providers accountable when they fail to do what is spelt out in the terms and conditions.

He also advised all stakeholders to keep the channel of communication open.

The informative and interactive forum discussed topics including unwanted messages, unsubscribed services, equipment certification, QoS, SIM Card Registration, data bundle, credit deductions, content regulations amongst other consumer-related issues.

The MNOs and NIA used the opportunity to register consumers' SIM Cards and Ghana cards respectively.



Consumers taking their turns to share their concerns



Consumers taking their turns to share their concerns



Cross Section of participants at the event

Hon. Ursula Owusu-Ekuful responding to a question from a participant

Advertorial



National
Communications
Authority



Mr. Joe Anokye responding to a question from a participant



Mr. George Sarpong, Executive Secretary of NMC explaining their mandate



Mr. Kofi Kapito, CEO of Consumer Protection Agency giving a brief remarks



Mrs. Nana Defie Badu, Director Consumer and Corporate Affairs of NCA moderating the second session of the programme



Cross Section of participants at the event



Mr. Kwame Poku Gyan of NCA moderating the event



Nii Ayitey Komey of NCA responding to a question from a participant



A representative from GIFEC responding to a question from a participant



Ms. Diana Owusu-Ansah, Ashanti Regional Manager of NCA giving the vote of thanks



Dr. Abudu Abdul Ganiyu of NIA speaking on issues of the Ghana Card



Representatives from the Mobile Network Operators responding to questions



The hearing impaired were not left out as a sign language instructor was there to assist



Cultural display



Cross Section of Nananom at the event





Participants listening attentively to the speakers



Cross section of Moslem and Christian Clergy



Rev. Opong Poku of the Ghana Baptist Convention giving the closing prayer



Hon. Minister in a group photograph with Nananom



Dignitaries exchanging pleasantries



Dignitaries exchanging pleasantries



Consumers took advantage of the programme to register their SIM Cards and Ghana Cards