FMCT identifies 200 telecoms service subsidy clusters

By **Bankole Orimisan**

FEDERAL Ministry of Communication Technology (FMCT),through the Universal Service Provision Fund (USPF) 'Access Gap study', has revealed over 200 subsidy clusters across the six geo political zones, which represent the areas where telecommunication services are yet to reach.

Subsequently, the USPF will utilize these clusters to identify target areas, define universal access service (UAS) interventions and map the interventions to the appropriate communities.

Chairman, Universal Service Provision Fund and Minister of Communication Technology, Dr. Omobola Johnson, this at the Industry Forum to unveil the USPF new website and to launch the clusters of ICT Gap, held in Lagos at the weekend.

Johnson said that the USPF in pursuit of its mandate to stimulate the deployment and utilization of ICT services in unserved and underserved communities and groups in the country, has continued to play a leading role in promoting and deepening ICT access and availability in the rural areas of the in the rural areas of the country.

She re-iterated that, mandate of the fund is the backdrop against which it developed the SMP 2013-2017 to guide execution of sustainable ICT projects which will improve the quality of lives of Nigerians and facilitate socio economic development.

Thus, the Access Gap study was conceptualized and has now culminated in the identification of over 200 subsidy clusters across the six geo political zones which represent the areas where telecommunication services are yet to reach, the Minister noted.

She emphasized that the Ministry, "will also share the results of the study with the Telecoms Operators to enable them get a detailed view of the needs and demands of the market and assist them in developing roll out plans for these unreached areas.

Chief Marketing Officer, Smile Communications Nigeria Limited, Mrs. Alero Ladipo (Right); Managing Director, Smile Communications Nigeria Limited, Michiel Buitelaar in handshake with Smile Communications Nigeria Limited Third best Indirect Channel Partner for the year 2014, Managing Director, Pheg Marathon Ventures Limited, Jude Ogulala while General Manager, Sales and Distribution , Smile Communications Nigeria Limited, Ken Esenwah watch during the presentation of prizes to reward the best 2014 Smile Communication Nigeria Limited Indirect Channel Partners in Lagos

Airtel *'Touching Lives'* launch on screen

By **Faith Oparaugo**

AIRTEL Nigeria, has unveiled a new, emotion-laden television series, Airtel Touching Lives, a revolutionary CSR intervention that is focused on empowering underprivileged individuals, communities and groups in the society.

The premiere, which was done in Lagos, brought to limelight the commitment and kind-heartedness of Airtel in uplifting underprivileged people across Nigeria through its CSR interventions.

Speaking at the event, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Airtel, Segun Ogunsanya,, described the initiative as a philanthropic gesture of the telecoms operators to connect emotionally with Nigerians and alleviate the suffering of helpless people across the country.

"This, without a doubt, underscores our determination to enrich lives and contribute to humanity. And the premiere tonight marks the beginning of a new journey in providing empowerment and a major lifeline for thousands of Nigerians.

"At Airtel, we are passionate about the people we serve and the Nigerian society. Airtel Touching Lives provides a platform for the underprivileged in our society to be identified, listened to and also cared for. For us, it is a commitment to connect with millions of Nigerians, alleviate their suffering and bring smile to their faces," Ogunsanya said.

The event was graced by top government functionaries, captains of industries, royal fathers, NGOs, media partners, and other distinguished guest from all walks of life. Some of the dignitaries at the event include Deputy Governor of the State of Osun, Otunba Titilayo Laoye-Tomori; United States Consul General in Nigeria, Jeffrey J. Hawkins; Ogun State First Lady and others.

SPUTTON enters online booking space

By **Bankole Orimisan**

A BUSINESS development services provider, Sputton Integrated Services Limited, has introduced SPUTTON, a unique, innovative and revolutionary service in road travel across Nigeria and the West African sub-region tailored towards enhancing bus travel operations, advance booking and reservation, e-ticketing and fare collection.

SPUTTON provides a one-stop solution (as an aggregator) for road travellers to book, pay for and obtain their travel tickets electronically at anytime and anywhere, thus providing a more convenient means of buying travel tickets.

The Chief Executive Officer/Managing Director, Napoleon Omomila, at the launch of the online platform in Lagos, said "our platform provides two key complementary services: Bus Service Management System and Online Ticket Booking and Travel Reservation System.

"This integrated system is a direct answer to the yearnings of a growing number of transport owners and operators who desire a one-stop, integrated and robust road travel management system that improves efficiency and increase revenues."

According to him, our unique platform not only simplifies planning, scheduling and managing buses for the travel operators, it also provides a safe, fast, secure and convenient mode of on-line payment and fare collection.

With SPUTTON's integrated approach, road travel operators can now offer their passengers centralised ticket booking and reservation service and easily manage advance bookings

Huawei seeks innovative ICT empowerment with smart grid solutions

By **Daniel Anazia**

FOR Huawei, Information and communications technology (ICT) no doubt is the foundation of a better-connected smart grid, data acquisition, protection and controlling a better connected smart grid requires innovative ICT applications. To achieve this, typical ICT applications use for a better-connected smart grid includes the Internet of Things (IoT), big data, cloud computing, and intelligent broadband solutions.

According to the company, a better-connected smart grid is an example of typical IoT application for the electric power industry. It noted that IoT technologies supports the effective integration of communications infrastructure and grid infrastructure, interconnection between high volumes of devices and improvements in the depth, breadth and density of information sensing throughout the entire operations of a of a better connected smart grid.

As a leading ICT solutions provider, Huawei launched a convergent and industry-leading IoT gateway that adopts broadband power-line communication (PLC) technologies. Leveraging an open machine-to-machine (M2M) platform and rich interfaces, the Huawei IoT gateway enables bi-directional high-speed interconnections between smart meters, sensors, and controllers. This provides an effective channel for connecting grid terminals to the IoT.

Electricity systems are generating increasingly large amount of data, which poses challenges to system operations and in-depth data analytics. For example, electric power companies in the United States started to install phasor measurement units (PMUs) across the country in 2009. The PMUs collect data on the voltage, current and status of a number of nodes on the grids at a frequency of thirty times per second. The data collected easily exceeds several TBs.

To make matters worse, the huge amounts of data can be scattered across a long distance. Many electric power companies have scattered data nodes because they have operations and electricity substations at different locations.

To help address this issue, Huawei developed the DC2 cloud data center solution. Leveraging innovative technologies such as distributed computing and virtual resources management, the DC2 cloud data center solution supports the effective utilization of scattered resources. This improves the electric power company's overall computing capability for industry-wide data collection and sharing.

These abilities allow grid operators to implement in-depth data analytics, enjoy the benefits of business intelligence (BI), make better business decisions, and coordinate production operations in a unified and effective manner. The Huawei OceanStor UDS massive storage system adopts an innovative architecture that enables EB-level scalability to support big data applications in the electric power industry.

The aggregate benefits of mass data collection devices and a unified information processing platform can only be utilised if they are connected through a broad and robust information superhighway, such as, a fast, secure, high-capacity and ubiquitous backbone network for the grid.

WASPAN seeks collaboration to boost $200m VAS market

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

COMPANIES offering value added services on mobile network have urged all stakeholders in the mobile telecommunications industry to join hands together in order to fully develop the wireless application sub-sector for the country's social and economic growth.

The body, under its trade body, Wireless Applications Service Providers Ltd GTE (WASPAN) said in a statement on Monday that the current scenario whereby mobile networks, wireless application service providers hold divergent opinions on several critical industry issues would not augur well for the sector's development and the country's growth.

According to the National Coordinating Consultant of WASPAN, Simon Aderinola, wireless application sub-sector is one that has emerged globally in recent years and not part of the traditional telecommunications services. He noted that based on this reality, there is some degree of uncertainty about how to regulate the activities of wireless application providers and how to help develop the sub-sector.

Aderinola said the problem was not peculiar to Nigeria, noting that in many countries after initial problems, collaboration between network operators, application service providers, the industry regulator and other stakeholders had led to the development of the industry for greater economic benefits.

"We need to learn from the success of the models adopted in the United Kingdom, South Africa, Kenya and Ghana. These are countries where the wireless application services industry is doing well. These countries collaborated to develop a framework that is now successfully benefitting stakeholders," he said.

It will be recalled that following unending controversies, especially between mobile networks and wireless application services providers, WASPAN in 2012 invited experts from South Africa to help in sharing their experiences on the matter.

Dr. Leon Pellman, the consultant that helped South Africa set up the country's joint industry regulatory framework led a delegation to Nigeria and had useful discussions with several stakeholders in the country on how to develop application service sub-sector in the telecom industry.

Aderinola stated that collaboration was needed so that the potential of the sector could be realized. It will be recalled that the industry regulator stated that the volume of business activities in mobile VAS segment of the Nigeria's highly competitive telecommunication industry is currently valued at $200 million year-on-year.

The revenue is, according to NCC, is expected to more than double to reach $500 million in the next few years if proper regulatory framework is put in place.

A major issue of disagreement between WASPAN and mobile networks is the current revenue sharing formula that gives close to 80 per cent to the networks. Another is the gradual encroachment by mobile network operators into the wireless applications sub-sector and the stifling of growth of small companies.