

Role of UCC in addressing Effects of EMF Radiation Exposure

Presentation by

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Role of UCC

- Mandate of UCC as stipulated in Cap 106, Laws of Uganda
 - Promote interests of consumers and operators on quality of communications services and equipment
 - Monitor, inspect, license and regulate communications services
 - Advise the government on communication policies in respect of the provision and operation of communication services
 - Setting National Communications standards

Policy and Technical Advice

- Specific to the subject of discussion, UCC ;
 - Advises on sector specific issues related to Environment Impact Assessment such as considerations for radiation exposure from base stations. Currently in conjunction with NEMA and operators, developing Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) guidelines
 - Advises government through Ministry of ICT and stakeholders on bearing of telecommunications development /deployment on the environment including effects on radiation and applicable international standards and policies

Policy and Technical Advice

- Reviews and provides comments to NEMA on Environmental Impact statements and audit reports on telecommunications development projects.
- Technical advice to NEMA requiring and/ encouraging operators to
 - evaluate compliance with limits of exposure (in terms of power density and electric field strength) as specified by ICNIRP guidelines

Policy and Technical Advice

- Put in place mitigation techniques, including admission controls, warning and signage posted at telecom facilities sites
 - Catering for accessibility categories of people ;
 - » Occupational; technical personnel, security guards;
 - » General population; general public or non workers) depending on location of equipment
 - Nature of installations such as height of masts and placement of antennas on masts

Promoting interests of consumers

- UCC promotes interests of consumers by
 - Developing and disseminating of Consumer information; UCC develops and produces consumer information on topical issues such as EMF radiation and effects on health- e.g. frequently asked questions on effects on EMF radiation from mobile base stations;
<http://www.ucc.co.ug/emfBaseStationFAQ.pdf>
 - Conducting technical assessments and investigations as a result of complaints lodged and files the same with National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)
 - Conducting awareness programs such as these

Licensing and monitoring of compliance

- Licenses issued require operators to comply with Environment Laws and Regulations of the country ; NEMA has detailed Environment Impact Assessment guidelines that cover telecommunications development projects.
- Inspections /investigations/assessments conducted with focus on
 - Primary equipment/facilities; communications Transmission(such as antennas) switching and distribution equipment
 - Secondary equipment/facilities/systems
 - Earthing,
 - Lightning protection,
 - Power systems
- Assessments include
 - Nature of installations; antenna and power limits in terms of electric field strength
 - Admission controls measures in place; such as fencing, entry barriers
 - Warning and danger signage; on areas with RF

Setting national communications standards

- UCC has put in place communication equipment type approval system (<http://www.ucc.co.ug/typeApprovalFAQ.php>),
 - That requires service providers to install equipment that meet standards specified by international communications organizations such as the ITU among others or as specified by UCC.
 - To submit specifications of equipment to be interfaced and/ interconnected to public network to ensure interoperability, quality ,safety and minimize interference; the equipment assessment framework is currently under review by the Commission

Conclusion

- UCC works in collaboration with international bodies like ITU, NEMA the national lead agency on environmental issues, the Ministry of ICT and service providers to address impact on environment of Telecommunications projects installations
- As regards EMF radiation, UCC technical advice to NEMA and key stakeholders is on effects of radiation from primary equipment or infrastructure used in provision of communications services and applicable standards

End

Thank you for your attention