Delegation Report

Purpose of Visit

The primary purpose of attending the GITEX AFRICA Conference in Marrakesh, Morocco was to represent the Republic of Sierra Leone in my capacity as the Special Envoy for Trade and Investment. Our mission was to identify and engage strategic partners who can support Sierra Leone's ambitions in bringing innovative technology and communication solutions to key sectors of our economy.

Preface: State of Technology in Sierra Leone

The Republic of Sierra Leone stands at a crucial crossroads in its digital development.

While significant strides have been made to expand mobile access and basic internet infrastructure, the country continues to face challenges in cyber security, system integration, and scalable digital transformation—especially within public sector institutions and private industry. With a growing demand for ICT solutions across government ministries, education, healthcare, and commerce, Sierra Leone urgently requires strategic partnerships to strengthen its digital economy and position itself as a technology-forward nation within the ECOWAS region.
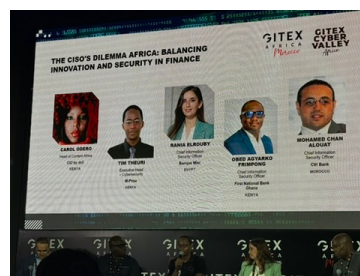
The Host City: Marrakesh, Morocco

Marrakesh proved to be an ideal host for GITEX Africa, offering not only world-class facilities but also a vibrant intersection of culture, innovation, and global collaboration. The city's strategic positioning as a tech hub for North and West Africa made it the perfect setting for building new relationships and benchmarking Sierra Leone's digital future against continental best practices.

Participants

I was joined at the GITEX conference by two distinguished professionals who are actively contributing to Sierra Leone's technology and innovation strategic agenda:

- **Dr. Quiana Shamsid-Deen**, Principal, Semtech (SL) – providing strategic leadership in IT education and infrastructure development
- **Mr. Kevin Burch**, CEO, BCivilized Solutions – specializing in business process automation and digital workforce transformation.

Their expertise added exceptional value to our delegation, allowing for productive engagement with global stakeholders.
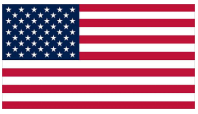
Private Meetings with Cisco

During the trip, we had the privilege of engaging in private meetings with our Strategic Partner Cisco.

Key Objectives Achieved

During our visit, we successfully met the following core objectives:

1. **Strategic Engagement with Cisco**
   - Met with Cisco regional representatives, country managers, and design architects to discuss Sierra Leone's current technology gaps and outline possible solutions
   - Discussed cyber security frameworks, mobile data system integration, government system digitization, and nationwide training and capacity-building programs
   - Initiated plans to co-develop a roadmap for digital transformation that includes both public and private sector applications

2. **Conference Participation**
   o Attended high-level forums and panel discussions on topics such as:
      ▪ **Cyber Security and Data Governance**
      ▪ **Policy Innovation and Digital Regulation in Africa**
      ▪ **Banking and Financial Security Systems**
      ▪ **Funding Models for African Tech Startups**
      ▪ **Cross-border Mobile Data Systems and Cloud Integration**

3. **Partnership Development**
   o Engaged with Cisco's ecosystem partners, vendors, and systems architects
   o Explored co-investment and technical support opportunities
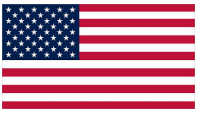   o Met with potential collaborators for the development of a Sierra Leone-based ICT hub

4. **Knowledge Transfer & Workforce Development**
   o Initiated dialogue around tech education, mentorship programs, and talent development as part of a broader vision for digital inclusion in Sierra Leone

Mobile Data Center Implementation

(AI Capabilities)

Conclusion

Following our engagements at GITEX, we will move forward with the following action items:

- Develop and submit a **formal technical proposal** to Sierra Leone and relevant decision makers
- Outline a **timeline** for project design, pilot programs, and phased implementation
- Present a detailed **high-level framework** that includes funding models, operational frameworks, and a focus on:
  - Government system digitization
  - Private sector infrastructure support
  - Cybersecurity readiness and resilience
  - Workforce capacity building and knowledge transfer
  - Last Mile Installation
  - Mobile Data Center Delivery

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