



Spotlight on the Mobile Telecommunications Industry in Africa

Angola [Go]

Wednesday, March 14 2007

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40,000 GSM Handsets Stolen Every Month - Expert

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WORRIED by the growing theft of handsets, a device that will track and render stolen mobile phones useless would soon be launched.

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It is estimated that 40,000 mobile phones are stolen every month in Nigeria, indicating that one out of every 500 phone users in the country loses his or her handset a month.

A company, National Silicon-Secured Limited, said it has devised a method to stem the tide.

National Silicon-Secured, which also commissioned a survey on stolen mobile handsets in the country, warned that mobile handset theft would continue to rise if unchecked.

Chief executive officer of the company, Prince Uchendu, said talks are already on with a view to introducing the anti-theft device.

Uchendu, a U.S.-based telecom expert yesterday said the security system would de-activate any stolen phone and make it unoperational on any of the networks within the region.

He said a tentative figure of N100 had been worked out as a monthly payment by subscribers to protect their phones from hoodlums and robbers.

He said the security network would involve some insurance companies who would replace missing handsets and all the stored information.

According to him, the security device for reducing phone theft could come into operation within four weeks, depending on the level of discussions with the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) and the National Security Advisers' office.

Describing the regular theft of handsets as a national security problem, he said, any phone stolen after the security device had been activated would be of no value to those keeping it.

Uchendu said that it was also possible to track stolen mobile phones with Geographic Positioning System (GPS) which would soon become regular features in phones.

To highlight the role of insurance firms, the Vice Chairman of UBA Insurance, Mr Nuyi Elumaro, said the rate for insuring handsets would be graduated to reflect the quality

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of the phones.

Elumaro said that insuring phones would be optional for subscribers, promising that the premium would cover the replacement of phones and all the stored information.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that some of the stakeholders in the enterprise include the Nigeria Police Force, National Bureau of Statistics, National Planning Commission, Kemson Concept Ltd and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

- Daily Champion (Lagos)



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