

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY
OF COMMUNICATIONS ALHAJI ADULAZEEZ MASHI ABDULLAHI
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 2018 MINISTERIAL RETREAT HELD AT
THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF
IBADAN, IBADAN, OYO STATE ON THE 25TH AND 26TH OF MAY,
2018.**

PROTOCOL,

I am delighted to welcome you to this year's ICT Ministerial Retreat holding here at the International Conference Centre, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State.

2. You will recall that the last Retreat was held in January 2016 and was aimed at repositioning the sector to be a major pillar and player in revamping the economy and ensuring that Nigerians are connected to the benefits that are presented by the communications revolution worldwide.

3. The theme of this year's Retreat is "***Mobilising ICT Institutions for Driving Economic Recovery and growth***". The Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), has been developed for the purpose of restoring economic growth while leveraging the ingenuity and resilience of the Nigerian people. It is premised on three broad strategic objectives of restoring growth; investing in people and; building a globally competitive economy. ICT being an enabler for economic growth and development is envisaged to drive the successful implementation of the ERGP if harnessed effectively and efficiently. Key sectors of the economy have recognized the importance of ICT in efficient and effective service delivery. Consequent

upon this, the country has witnessed a number of new initiatives leveraging ICT in various sectors and at different levels of government.

4. This Retreat will therefore, seek to leverage the strategic and pivotal role of the Nigeria's ICT Sector to drive the nation's economy through its value added services to the growth of many other sectors and as an overall enabler of socio-economic development in the society.

5. It is set to consolidate on the achievements of the outcome of the last Retreat and afford the Ministry the opportunity to receive additional inputs that will lead to the validation of: the Zero draft of the Reviewed ICT Policy; the proposed ICT Sector Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework and; come up with an agreed 2018 Work Plan and Targets of the Ministry and its Agencies respectively.

6. You will recall that the current National ICT Policy which was approved in principle by FEC in 2012, has remained largely unimplemented. This has been attributed to the fact that there was no action plan to guide the implementation of key initiatives contained in the Policy, neither was there a framework to monitor and evaluate performance. As a result, the Hon. Minister has approved the setting up of a committee, comprising of representatives of the Ministry to review the Policy. This review is expected to take care of emerging issues in the sector, resolve grey areas and as well as tackle the observed shortcomings in the current policy. The Committee has come up with a Zero Draft Document for validation at this Retreat.

7. I am pleased to inform you that the outcome of the last retreat led to the development of ICT strategic Roadmap, which has been approved by

FEC. To ensure effective implementation and delivery of the ICT Roadmap there is the need for an aligned M&E Framework which was earlier discussed in a workshop attended by Ministry and our Agency officials involved in Monitoring and Evaluation as well as strategy. The document is for validation and onward approval by the Hon. Minister.

8. It is therefore pertinent for this Retreat to carry out robust deliberations and recommend decisions which will translate into policies that will facilitate the various ICT institutions to successfully implement the ERGP. The adoption of the outcome of this meeting and subsequent implementation, will ensure the re-positioning of Nigeria in line with the vision of President Muhammadu Buhari's administrations change agenda.

9. This years retreat as usual will kick off with opening ceremony after which the business sessions will commence in plenary. There will be two executive panels to discuss arising issues from the plenary presentations. In addition there will be questions and answers sessions to deepen discussions. Finally there will be Syndicate sessions which will also make presentations. The outcomes of these activities will be put into a Communique that will be read at the end of the retreat.

10. The programme promises to be both tasking and exciting and will there require the contributions of all . Once again I welcome all of you and thank you for keeping faith with this date. I wish all of us fruitful deliberations.

11. God bless you.