



## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**BY THE**

**HON. MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS  
BARRISTER ABDUR-RAHEEM ADEBAYO SHITTU**

**AT THE**

**BUSINESSDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL BROADBAND SUMMIT 2017  
THE WHATBAKER  
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## **Protocol**

I am indeed delighted to be here today to give this keynote address at this all important event.

It is a well-known fact globally that ICT, and most especially broadband, is an important asset for the Socio-economic development of every Country. Nigeria as a Country has over the years enjoyed varying levels of development and successes in ICT infrastructure deployment and development ranging from submarine cable landings at the shores of the Country with a total capacity of about 11Terabits, the liberalization and deregulation of the Telecommunications sector, the increased utilization of Mobile Broadband access etc. More Government services are currently being delivered online which has further raised the demand for broadband access and creation of new business opportunities.

This high demand for quality broadband access has exerted enormous pressure on the existing terrestrial broadband infrastructure. Government recognized this challenge and has taken bold steps to create an enabling environment for interested investors to key into the opportunities presented by the infrastructure gap. Nigeria currently has less than 50,000 base stations and still requires 70,000 to 80,000 base stations to substantially cover the broadband needs of the nation. The Ministry is of the view that the broadband needs of the nation can be better actualized with an appropriate ICT infrastructure design that will incorporate a National Broadband

Infrastructure Backbone, Metro/Intra-City Fibre Network, Last mile services including Fibre to the Home (FTTH ) and wireless network as well as WiFi connectivity.

To this end Government, in conjunction with key stakeholders, developed the Nigerian National Broadband Plan and Strategy 2013 – 2018 to facilitate broadband infrastructure development and deepen broadband penetration. The strategy provides for the creation of the Nigerian National Broadband Council to regularly review the progress, facilitate coordination and collaboration in the delivery of the plan, as well as highlight area of program adjustment to permit the realization of new and emerging opportunities. The maiden Nigerian National Broadband Council was inaugurated in 2013 by my predecessor, Dr. (Mrs.) Omobola Johnson and the Council has been reconstituted by my humble self with the inaugural meeting held from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> of May, 2017.

The Council reviewed the progress so far made by the sector and offered credible suggestions towards sustainable growth of the sector. Notable among these is the resolve to Declare National Emergency Status for ICT Infrastructure Rollout; Review Licensing Regime to support additional services that can be offered by existing Licensees and encourage new entrants; Liaise with all State Governments in harmonizing fees and charges for Right of Way (RoW) approval and permits; Review all Policies and Laws including the National Communications Act 2003; Set up Inter-Ministerial

Harmonization Committee on Convergence; Compensating the Cable Operators to relinquish the Spectrum Band currently occupied by them etc.

The Ministry has already taken some measures to address the concerns raised by stakeholders over the challenges militating against ICT infrastructure rollout especially the multiple and exorbitant Right of Way (RoW) charges. Considering that these multiple charges on Right of Way constituted the bulk of initial investment cost of ICT infrastructure rollout thereby raising the Capital Expenditure astronomically, the Ministry set-up a Ministerial Committee to develop an appropriate document to articulate issues and recommend mitigating strategies. The Ministerial Committee has completed its work and made valuable recommendations including Review of all existing Legislations, Acts, Institutional and Regulatory Framework especially the National ICT Policy and the National Communications Act 2003 and update same with the insertion/incorporation of a section on Right of Way. Copies of the report have been distributed to key stakeholders for their buy-in and implementation.

Stakeholders are therefore invited to liaise with the Ministry and make quality contributions towards policy formulation that will support an accelerated broadband development in Nigeria.

Ladies and gentlemen, I urge all Nigerians and the General Public to contribute their quota towards the achievement of a ubiquitous broadband infrastructure for the nation.

May I seize this opportunity to congratulate the organizers of this event for their foresight and wish all of you fruitful deliberation.

Thank You.