



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE EVC/CEO NCC, DR. EUGENE IKEMEFUNA JUWAH AT THE NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATIVE FORUM ON HARNESSING COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AS A CATALYST FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to this Forum with the theme: **Harnessing Communications Technology as a Catalyst for National Development**. It is also very gratifying to meet with you on this occasion to deliberate on issues we consider of critical importance to the well-being and growth of the telecommunications industry.

Communications technology has become a major enabler in the growth process of humanity. Today, communications has remained permanently visible, with its applicability to almost every human endeavour from agriculture to food security, to manufacturing, energy and physical infrastructure sectors with ramifications for governance, e-commerce, and the provision of public and social services. Indeed, Nigeria's growth has been mirrored by a concomitant boom in telecommunications in recent time. It is a sector that holds the key to the realization of Nigeria's ambition to truly emerge as a dominant developing economy. To this end, the application and promotion of communications technology to facilitate rapid growth and national development must be institutionalised in all facets of our economy.

## **CURRENT CHALLENGES OF THE INDUSTRY:**

The achievements of the industry in the last 10 years notwithstanding, the sector is currently facing some challenges which all critical stakeholders need to address in order to achieve pervasive service availability and ultimately, improved quality of service. The achievement of telephone penetration of 95, 886, 714 lines and a teledensity of 68. 49 is burdened and dwarfed by worsening quality of service, multiple taxation, multiple regulation, deteriorating power supply, extraneous regulatory issues by other agencies of government and a host of

other issues. Although some of these problems, like multiple taxation, is a global issue and received global attention recently at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona with the ITU Secretary-General, Dr Hamadoun Toure, calling on governments not to kill the telecommunications industry with taxes, some of them are peculiar to us and they need to be tackled very urgently for quick resolution. This informed my policy direction when I took over the leadership of the NCC.

## **OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

On assuming office I articulated six focus areas that will occupy the attention of the Commission in order to further animate the industry and bring more fulfilling benefits to telecom users. They include:

- Consolidation of Mobile services;
- Fixed Lines and Broadband Deployment;
- Enhanced Competitive Market and Choices for Consumers;
- Vigorous Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement;
- National Connectivity for Accelerated Growth; and
- Enhanced International Relations.

Some of the actions we have taken in the very recent past were specially targeted at achieving some of the above initiatives. For instance, the SIM Card Registration which began on March 28, 2011, is nearing conclusion. As we speak the combined registration teams of the NCC and the service providers have registered 110, 433, 976 SIM Cards and the data is going through processing and cleaning at the NCC. We are shortly going to commence verification and ensure that multiple registrations are eliminated in order to create a database integrity and credibility.

This will naturally lead to the implementation of a more robust Mobile Number Portability (MNP) which is at advanced stage of actualisation. The exercise, we believe, can positively impact on quality of service and stimulate another facet of healthy competition. That project will also broaden the choices available to subscribers and impose a code of behaviour on the operators to retain their subscribers.

Although the problem of quality of service (QoS) looked intractable for a while, I am relieved to announce that some definite measures are being taken to bring it under control. One of such measures is the recent approval and gazetting of the Quality of Service Regulations by the Federal Ministry of Justice. This will strengthen the NCC to take some severe measures when service providers are found wanting. I am also happy to announce that only recently the Commission engaged the services of seven Drive-Test contractors to carry out quality of service drive-testing in the six geo-political zones and Lagos. They will commence service fully by early April. It is expected to lead to comprehensive and across the country quality of service monitoring. In addition our Monitoring and Enforcement Personnel have been very busy lately, either shutting down the activities of illegal users of spectrum or engaging importers of handsets that are not type-approved. We will not permit professional banditry in the industry as we are fully empowered by the Communications Act to deal with issues of compliance and assurance standards.

On the issue of business development, the NCC has also identified Broadband deployment as one way of introducing more competition into the industry, and this can also reduce the pressure on mobile services which presently account for over 90 per cent of current broadband availability. To implement this we have adopted the open access model as platform; we are also looking at resuscitating the Fixed Line sector by giving out new licenses and in doing this, increase telephony penetration. The success of this twin action, we expect, will enhance choice of products and services, reduce over reliance on mobile services and encourage internet usage, which is the future of ICT.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Commission as a matter of tradition institutionalised formal strategic planning in the management of her operations in its efforts to ensure that the goals and objectives of the Commission as set out in the NCA 2003, the NTP 2000 and other enabling legislations are met. As a forward looking organisation, we believe that our corporate interests and intervention activities must be guided by an integrated planning methodology and performance management system that can quickly respond to the challenges of the sector. To this end, a robust Strategic Management Plan (SMP) is not only imperative, but highly expedient.

The aim of this National Stakeholders Consultative Forum therefore is to ensure that critical inputs from our key external stakeholders are considered in the development of a 5-year Strategic Management Plan for the Commission. The new 5-year (2013 – 2017) SMP being developed will be the culmination of a series of strategic planning meetings, interactive sessions and forums, such as this one, with both internal and external stakeholders helping to enrich discussions.

## **CONCLUSION**

As I have said in one or two occasions, we want big stories to be written of the country's communications industry once more; and for the global community to always recognise us as a destination country for telecommunications investment. We also want the Nigerian subscribers to enjoy the best of services, comparable to anywhere else in the world. Let's work together to develop programmes and projects that will ensure that communications technology really delivers a better quality of life for all our people.

Finally, I will like to thank our Honourable Minister for Communications Technology for her support for the activities of the Commission, which we believe will continue into the future.

I thank you all for your attention.

**Dr. Eugene Juwah,  
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Lagos**