



**OPENING REMARKS BY THE EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN/CEO OF NIGERIAN COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION, PROFESSOR UMAR GARBA DANBATTA, FNSE, AT THE CONSULTATION FORUM ON THE DRAFT REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROVISION OF VALUE ADDED SERVICES IN NIGERIA, HELD AT LAGOS SHERATON HOTEL AND TOWERS ON APRIL 27, 2016**

**Protocols**

It is my singular privilege to welcome you all to another forum convened by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) in order to deepen the growth in the telecommunications sector in a remarkable and measurable manner.

You will recall, just two months ago, right in this hall, I addressed the global media in a Press Conference where I unveiled the 8-Point Agenda of the NCC Management under my leadership.

Today, we are gathered here to reflect on the draft regulatory framework for the provision of Value Added Services in Nigeria, in another demonstration of our commitment to that Agenda. Our gathering at this time, is in line with Commission's rule-making processes, and in substantial compliance with the guiding principle of carrying out representative and wide consultations in the development of regulatory instruments as stipulated by the Nigerian Communications Act 2003.

Consultation enriches the quality of debate and the outcome of our engagement with stakeholders. It has now become a hallmark, a distinctive signpost of our operation, and the cornerstone of our strengths and successes at the Commission.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the centrality of Value Added Services segment to the consolidation of the gains in the telecoms sector is one reason this joint examination of the draft regulatory framework is very significant. This segment is overdue for regulation as envisaged in our 8-Point Agenda, specifically on the item on *Promotion of ICT Innovation and Investment Opportunities*. In addition, you will also recall that a constitutive component of the 8-Point Agenda is the *Facilitation of Broadband Penetration*.

Indeed, the totalizing objective of our 8-Point Schema, is to promote ICT innovation locally, increase investment in youths, promote Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), as well as provide and optimize access to the use of affordable fixed and mobile broadband everywhere in Nigeria. In a material sense, these visions should produce increase in employment, stimulate economic activities and growth, as well as culminate in the development of quality local contents that utilize broadband infrastructure as envisioned by the ITU's Broadband Commission in its characterization of the broadband echo system.

Therefore, it stands to reason, that except we are determined to develop and encourage quality local contents in Nigeria by rewarding content developers who are the major players in the VAS segment of the industry, our vision will be obstructed.

Accordingly, we stand at the threshold of history as the regulatory authority of telecommunications in Nigeria to create a level playing field for all stakeholders and to ensure that each stakeholder gets commensurate value for the roles they play in the Telecoms industry.

Collectively, we should get this done. It is a moral duty. It is a legal one too. Indeed, it is a historic obligation because value addition in our sector is essentially thrust upon the shoulders of SMEs. Remember, it is SMEs with innovative ideas that have the potential to create jobs and thereby contribute concretely to economic growth and development.

It is for these reasons, ladies and gentlemen, that we have invited you to this forum so we can reason together. The draft regulatory framework before you today is a product of multiple efforts and reflections, including your own ideas which were submitted to the Commission following our advertisement on this subject matter in several dailies in

March 2016. The document's principal focus is to encourage critical players participate in the Value Added Services subsector by defining the roles and responsibilities of each player in a manner that is transparent, healthy and jointly beneficial.

The regulatory framework when finalized will complement the NCA 2003, and the respective licenses issued by the Commission in providing guiding principles, standards and protocols for the VAS operation of the industry. It is to ensure that we are consistent in our adherence to international best practices for which we are notable, while taking into consideration the peculiar realities of our operating environment.

We therefore appeal to all participants to contribute freely and frankly in a way that will be helpful to the Commission in finalizing this draft regulation speedily. We assure you that every view expressed would be respected and taken into consideration.

Finally, on behalf of Management and staff of NCC, I thank you for this collaboration and continued support towards ensuring the birth of a robust regulatory framework that will guarantee consumer satisfaction, sustain investors' confidence and enhance the growth of the telecommunications industry in Nigeria.

Thank you and stay blessed.

**Prof. Umar Garba Danbatta, FNSE**  
Executive Vice Chairman  
Nigerian Communications Commission

27 April, 2016