

**OPENING REMARKS BY THE EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN,
NCC, PROF. UMAR GARUBA DANBATTA, FNSE, AT THE 83RD
EDITION OF TELECOM CONSUMER PARLIAMENT (TCP)
HOLDING THURSDAY MARCH 29, 2018 AT THE DIGITAL
BRIDGE INSTITUTE, CAPP, OSHODI, LAGOS**

The Executive Commissioner, Technical Services, NCC

The Executive Commissioner, Stakeholders Management, NCC

Management and Staff of NCC,

Telecom Service Providers,

Consumer Advocacy Groups,

Collaborating Agencies,

Our Esteemed Telecom Consumers

The Media

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted to welcome you all to the 83rd Edition of the Telecom Consumer Parliament (TCP) taking place here in DBI, Lagos.

As you are already aware, the Telecoms Consumer Parliament has become an important platform for our major stakeholders ie. The Service providers, Telecom Consumers etc to interact on issues of common interest. It has also provided a unique opportunity for consumers of the telecom industry to be enlightened and educated on burning issues in the industry.

Today's theme which is Value Added Services (VAS) and its Benefits to Consumers was discussed in Abuja during the 82nd edition of TCP. However, due to low participation of the targeted stakeholders especially VAS Providers , and in order to underscore the importance of this segment of telecom market, the Commission decided to engage the industry stakeholders once more on this important subject.

There is no doubt that the VAS is adding to the excitement in the telecom market as well as spicing up consumer quality of experience in the industry.

The Value Added Service is an important element of the telecom ecosystem necessary for optimizing the benefits of telecom service to the consumers. It enables in a very special way, social media and e-commerce activities that might be useful to the Consumer while offering a veritable tool for entrepreneurs and businesses in this modern and mobile age of the Internet of Things (IoT's).

Whereas VAS could be very useful and provide services that may interest consumers and assist online and offline entrepreneurs to reach customers, particularly on the mobile markets both to advertise and to sell their products and services; on the other hand it could become a challenge, flooding the networks and thus consumers with all kinds of product offering that most consumers may not be interested in.

The Commission therefore deems it fit to find a balance between enabling the opportunities that the VAS providers offer to some consumers, while at the same time mitigating the challenges or inconvenience they could constitute to other consumers. Thus, while service providers are licensed by the Commission and are allowed to operate and provide value added services to consumers, the consumers are empowered through the DND facility to choose whether to allow or block access to these services on a full or partial basis.

The recent reform the Commission embarks on in the VAS segment of the market is a further recognition of significant role of VAS in the entire telecom ecosystem.

You will therefore recall that the Commission on March 1, 2018 held a Consultative Forum on Value Added Services Aggregator Framework at the Commission's head office in Abuja. The Forum is one of a series of Consultations started by the Commission since early last year with different stakeholders of the VAS sub- sector of the industry to discuss and fine-tune the framework's regulatory intervention.

The framework designed by the Commission in consultation with industry players is to be adopted to enhance regulatory excellence and ease the operations of VAS provision in the Nigeria's telecoms industry. The addition of the VAS Aggregator player to the original Value chain (Content Developer- VAS Provider- Network Service Provider) will lead to the

recreation of the value chain into a framework of Content Developer- VAS Service Provider- VAS Aggregator- Network Service Provider. The overall aim of this reform is to ensure fairness in the entire VAS value chains.

I must say that the VAS segment of the industry despite its challenges is no doubt a hub for employment opportunities, huge revenue generation and national economic development. It must therefore accord necessary regulatory intervention to realise its full potentials.

The Commission considers it necessary therefore to educate consumers regarding these exciting services so that they can understand and appreciate their potential benefits and take maximum advantages of the services. This is to ensure adequate patronage by the consumers and guarantee sustainability of the VAS sub sector of telecom market.

Ladies and gentleman, I look forward to an interesting and exciting session today and on that note, I hereby declare this parliament open and wish you fruitful deliberations.

Thank you.

**Professor Umar Garba Danbatta, FNSE, FRAES
Executive Vice Chairman/CEO NCC.**