

REMARKS BY PROF. UMAR GARBA DANBATTA, EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE NIGERIAN COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (NCC) AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE FOR THE EVALUATION OF 2018 RESEARCH PROPOSALS FROM THE ACADEMIA

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this ceremony this morning and to thank you for agreeing to work with us on a programme that is vital to the Telecommunications industry and also very valuable to the academic community by way of adding value to research output. Finding local solutions to the challenges of the industry is a policy of the present administration.

Our objective has been to deliberately utilize the capacity resident in the academia and to redirect it towards getting involved in research activities that can impact on business and society leading to the development new products and services for the entire industry. We are also of the strong opinion that for an industry that has recorded globally appreciated growth over the years and a major contributor to the country's GDP, the sector has capacity to contribute to the expansion of knowledge in the academia and consequently profit from such contribution.

This gathering underlines the importance of the foregoing, and to point a way to the direction we are headed. In my communication with Vice Chancellors of Nigerian Universities, I have had to point out some developments in the Commission which include: creating a Department of Research and Development to consolidate all research activities. That means research activities now attracts priority attention. It should be very evident therefore that although the Commission's engagement with academia has been on for a couple of years, a fresh impetus has been added to ensure that such engagement becomes very robust, productive and beneficial to the various stakeholders.

I have been informed that we have a good response to our advert requesting for research proposals from the Academia this year. The entry for submission of research proposals closed on September 7, 2018. Telecommunication is a catalyst and facilitator of growth and development of other industries. Our goal is to be able use this intervention to address industry problems as well as some other societal issues that need urgent attention. To achieve this objective, the Committee members are challenged to go through every document in order to achieve a very fair assessment of every submission.

There are few requirements that stand out in the evaluation criteria that a proposal must meet however. They include but are not limited to Clear statement and explanation of the problem, Proposed solution to the problem, Clear relevance to the Telecommunication industry, Evidence of local realization up to prototype, Cost reasonableness (cost of actualizing the idea excluding furniture and allowances) and schedule of project organization. Other important aspects are Coherent presentation/packaging of concept and integration of research with education (capacity building of students via the implementation of the project in the institution).

Ladies and Gentlemen, while I want to state here very categorically that our budget is not elastic due to the prevailing economy which is slowly rising out of recession, I will want to quickly add that students getting involved in implementing proposals and being given the opportunity to contribute to develop new solutions for the Telecommunications sector is an important objective. For this reason we are irrevocably committed to the implementation of the selected proposals and can vouch for their sustainability into the foreseeable future. Let me personally canvas that we pick proposals with definite timelines of implementation.

It is now my singular honour and privilege to formally inaugurate this Inter-agency Committee and I wish you well in all your deliberations.

Thank you for listening.

Prof. Umar Graba Dabatta, FNSE, FRAES

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