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**THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA**  
**FEDERAL MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY**

The Honourable Minister for Communication Technology

**Mrs. Omobola Johnson**

**At**

**Nigeria Internet Governance Forum (NIGF-2012):**

**“Consolidating Nigeria’s Position on the Global  
Internet Governance Forum 2012”**

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## PROTOCOLS

### INTRODUCTION

When one thinks about inventions that have radically changed and now define the development of humanity, the culmination of inventions that gave us the internet must surely sit amongst them. Alongside inventions such as the wheel, the plough, the steam engine and electricity; the internet has changed paradigms and redefined the development of the world both economically and socially.

The internet increasingly informs how we live, work, learn, profit, govern, and communicate. What started out as a predominantly academic network is becoming the lifeblood of finance, commerce and social relationships.

Thirty three percent (33%) of the World's population currently use the internet including thirteen point five (13.5%) of the people living in Africa. Whilst this percentage is low, the rate at which it is growing is not. Between 2000 and 2011, the number of Africans that use the internet grew by almost 3000%<sup>1</sup>.

Estimates are that as at December 2011, forty five (45) million Nigerians had used the internet at least once – this is up from a mere two hundred thousand (200,000) in 2000.

### “GOVERNING” THE INTERNET

The increasing availability of the internet and the rapid rate at which it is being adopted have been accompanied by louder calls for international agreement on why and how it should be managed and governed. During the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society – the process that gave rise to the Internet Governance Forum, and as such the purpose of our meeting here today – the World agreed that:

“...the international management of the internet should be multilateral, transparent and democratic, with the full involvement of governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations. It should ensure an equitable

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<sup>1</sup> See Internet World Stats <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm> for precise figures

distribution of resources, facilitate access for all and ensure a stable and secure functioning of the internet, taking into account multilingualism.”<sup>2</sup>

It is my hope that your deliberations today will identify and articulate the areas that need to be addressed at a National level to help ensure that our country attains these goals. It is my hope that your deliberations also articulate how we as a Nation can contribute meaningfully to the attainment of these same goals on a global level.

Recent unfortunate events in our country, in which the internet has been used as a medium to perpetuate heinous crimes and distribute falsehoods, should not diminish the broad scope your discussions require/dictate.

Indeed we mourn and commiserate with the family and (real) friends of Cynthia Osokogu and all those that have suffered at the hands of people that use the internet, much as they use any other medium or tool, for criminal activities. Yet we should also remember that the successful and continual protection of our society requires that we have a holistic definition of governance, one akin to that provided in the Tunis Agenda as:

“...the development and application by governments, the private sector and civil society, in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the internet”

Governance should not therefore necessarily be equated to bans and restrictions. However experiences now indicate the need for strengthening the sense of responsibility amongst users of the internet and bringing more traditional, “off-line” tools of governance in line with our new digital “on-line” reality.

This year’s Internet Governance Forum with its theme of **Internet Governance for Sustainable Human, Economic and Social Development** and sub-themes of:

- Internet governance for development (IG4D)
- Issues that are emerging in the use of the internet,
- The management of critical internet resources,
- Security, openness and privacy,
- Access and diversity, and
- The need to take stock of the IGF to date and ponder the way forward

reflect how broad your deliberations today need to be.

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<sup>2</sup> See section 29 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society. Available online at <http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs2/tunis/off/6rev1.html>

## LOCAL CONCERNS IN A GLOBAL SPACE

Even as you take your cue from the organization and structure of the global event, you are expected to be mindful of our local circumstances.

In Nigeria we care about the freedom to seek, receive, impart and use information especially when it relates to the creation, accumulation and dissemination of knowledge. We also care about insecurity, (cyber) crime, piracy, privacy and spam as well as the security and stability of the internet infrastructure.

These cares often find expression as competing concerns; and it is the responsibility of for a such as this – with its strong focus on multi-stakeholderism – to search for consensus; to be representative by allowing for views from each stakeholder “community”, as well as neutral and be open to the views of participants irrespective of their origin.

Mahatma Ghandi cautioned against a society where rights existed without responsibility. We all – government, the private sector, and civil society – have responsibilities in ensuring that the beneficial uses of the internet far outweigh its manipulation to cause harm. I encourage you therefore to remember that the decision that are made in gatherings such as this and the Global Internet Governance Forum have a major impact on the deployment of technologies, products and services, and the application of ICTs in our society.

## CONCLUSION

While I wish you a successful deliberation, I challenge you all again to produce useful outcome which will assist the country in taking a leading position at the Global Internet Governance Forum later this year.

Please permit me to commend the organizers, Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), and Nigeria Internet Registration Association (NIRA), and other stakeholders collaborating with the Ministry of Communication Technology for their patriotic commitment towards ensuring broad participation and engagement of cross section of stakeholders.

I can assure you that the Ministry will articulate various submissions emanating from this Forum and put them into use during my Presentation at the Global Internet Governance Forum in Baku.

Do have a successful deliberation; I do hereby declare the Forum open.

Thank You