Press Release

Date:	EMBARGO - 11 March 2014, 00.01 GMT
Contact:	press@webfoundation.org

Nigerian government, ICT industry and global technology leaders to mark 25th anniversary of the Web by ushering in a new era of affordable Internet access

- *Policy makers and technology leaders gather in Abuja, Nigeria's capital, to stimulate efforts to increase Nigerian broadband penetration five-fold to 30 percent by 2018*

- *Alliance for Affordable Internet leads collaborative drive to increase affordable access across Africa, Asia and Latin America*

Abuja, Nigeria & Washington DC, USA. An innovative and interactive new drive to empower affordable Internet access will today unite the Nigerian government as well as key members of the Nigerian ICT industry with technology leaders from across Africa and the rest of the world on the eve of the 25th anniversary of the Web.

Twenty-five years after Web inventor Sir Tim Berners-Lee submitted his proposal for the World Wide Web (12 March 1989**),** the world's broadest technology sector coalition, the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI), is bringing together government ministers, technology innovators, researchers and campaigners to drive forward the policy change, dialogue and investment needed to put internet access in the hands of millions across Africa.

The forum will aim to consolidate support for, as well as build upon ongoing efforts to increase broadband penetration in Nigeria five-fold to 30 percent by 2018. The Nigerian government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with A4AI and participants at the forum include the Honourable Minister of Communication Technology, Mrs. Omobola Johnson.

The forum will also see the launch of a new multi-stakeholder coalition that will contribute to the development of policies intended to bring in a new era of widespread and affordable internet access.

As laid out in the recently published Nigerian National Broadband Plan, the existing challenges to greater Internet and broadband access in Nigeria will be tackled head-on by:

- Incentivizing the deployment of a national fiber optic network across the entire country;

- Developing a framework that ensures the potential benefits of open access and infrastructure sharing are realised;

- Addressing high cost points such as spectrum prices and the cost of physical attacks on infrastructure; and

- Increasing citizen awareness about the possible benefits of the internet and how to use it.

According to the World Bank, eighty-four percent of Nigerians live on less than two dollars per day and 63 percent live on less than $1.25 per day. A prepaid mobile broadband user subsisting on $2 per day who wanted to use 1GB of data per month would have to spend 22 percent of their monthly income to do so.

At present, one third of Nigerians use the Internet, up from 28 percent in 2011 and 24 percent in 2010. However, the broadband penetration rate is only 6 percent.

In Nigeria, fixed broadband currently costs 39 percent of average monthly income, with a 500MB pre-paid mobile broadband plan averaging 13 percent.

The Alliance for Affordable Internet and its 55 members, whose global sponsors are Google, Omidyar Network, the UK's Department for International Development and the US Agency for International Development, will work hand-in-hand with the Nigerian government and sector stakeholders to support the Government in the implementation of its vision for affordable broadband access to all Nigerians.

The Honorable Minister of Communication Technology, Omobola Johnson said:

"We welcome the opportunity to align ourselves with other forward looking governments and members of the Global ICT industry as well the 'unified voice and coordinated focus' that is represented by the A4AI. We are also extremely pleased to note the common approach to tackling the problems of providing ubiquitous, affordable access to the Internet for all Nigerian citizens as is represented by our recently launched Nigerian National Broadband Plan. We view this forum as extremely timely and a key part of our consolidating internal as well as external support for the changes needed to accelerate the needed improvements in our National Broadband network".

Sonia Jorge, Executive Director of A4AI said:

"On the 25th anniversary of the Web, we are working to unlock the power of the internet in Africa and place it in the hands of those for whom it remains out of reach. Nigeria is one of the fastest growing markets in Africa but overcoming the challenges to increased access will not be solved by a single solution or player. Through collaboration we need to create policy and regulatory environments that reduce cost structures for providers, users and potential users of the internet environments that stimulates investment, increase affordability and encourage internet use. In Nigeria, A4AI will be focusing on reaching rural communities and those living below the poverty line, so all Nigerian women and men can realize the benefits of the Web."

Funke Opeke, CEO of Main One said:

"Main One is delighted to see the Alliance focus on Nigeria with the launch here in October 2013, followed by this forum in Abuja today. We are in agreement that the emphasis on collaboration and open access in Nigeria's broadband plan will need to be actualized to ensure affordable internet delivery and look forward to working with other industry players and government to make the vision of affordable Internet a reality for all Nigerians."

Further Background

A4AI has grown rapidly as an coalition since its launch in October 2013, achieving a membership of over 50 organisations in just four months. Global sponsors Google, Omidyar Network, the UK's Department for International Development and the US Agency for International Development have been joined by a host of governments, technology companies and civil society organisations from developed and developing countries. The group is co-ordinated by the [World](#) [Wide](#) [Web](#) [Foundation](#), founded by Web inventor, Sir Tim Berners-Lee. It will work in a number of countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America, and has already signed a memorandum of understanding with the governments of Ghana and Nigeria. A4AI is advocating for open, competitive and innovative broadband markets with a focus on achieving the UN Broadband Commission Broadband Target of entry-level broadband services priced at less than 5% of average monthly income.

Full List of Alliance Members

A4AI's 50+ members reach across boundaries of geography, industry, and organisation type and include governments, companies, and civil society organisations from both developed and developing countries.

Global Sponsors	Private Sector	Public Sector and Academia	Civil Society and Foundations	Local Partners
Google Inc	Alcatel-Lucent	Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation	Association for Progressive Communications (APC)	Gambia YMCA Computer Training Centre
Omidyar Network	Cisco	Center for Technology and Society of the Getulio Vargas Foundation (CTS/FGV)	Cherie Blair Foundation for Women	Center for Business Transformations (at Millennium Development Institute Ghana)

UK Department for International Development	Digicel	Dialogo Regional sobre Sociedad de la Informacion (DIRSI)	Consumers International	Coollink
USAID	Ericsson	Government of Sweden (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	Ford Foundation	Fantsuam Foundation
	Facebook	US State Department	Global Partners	The Science Innovation and Information and Communication Technology Research Institution (SIITRI)
	Intel Corporation	Nigeria (Ministry of Communication Technology)	Grameen Foundation	Nigeria Network of NGOs
	Main One	Ghana (Ministry of Communications)	Internet Society	Africa ICT Right
	Microsoft Corp.	LIRNEasia	Inveneo	My Digital Bridge Foundation
	Yahoo!		IREX/Beyond Access	
	GSMA		New America Foundation's Open Technology Institute (OTI)	
	Cambium Networks		Research ICT Africa	
	Gilat Satcom		Software & Information Industries Association	
	Internet Solutions		The Centre for Internet &	

			Society	
	Phase 3 Telecom		**Women in Global Science and Technology**	
			World Wide Web Foundation	
			World Pulse	
			Internet Sans Frontieres	
			Digital Society Foundation	
			Taiguey	
			Internews	
			Mercy Corps	

--ENDS--

Photographs and interviews available on request.

Notes to Editors

1) The [Alliance](#) [for](#) [Affordable](#) [Internet](#) (A4AI) is a global coalition committed to driving down the cost of internet access in less developed countries.

A4AI focuses on creating the conditions for open, efficient and competitive broadband markets via policy and regulatory reform. Through a combination of advocacy, research and knowledge-sharing, the Alliance aims to facilitate the achievement of the UN Broadband Commission target of entry-level broadband services priced at less than 5% of average monthly income. In doing so, A4AI will help to connect the two-thirds of people in developing countries who cannot access the internet.

A4AI members are drawn from both developed and less developed countries and include public, private and not-for-profit organizations. The [World](#) [Wide](#) [Web](#) [Foundation](#), founded by Web inventor Sir Tim Berners-Lee, initiated the Alliance. Global sponsors are Google, Omidyar

Network, USAID and the UK DFID and the Alliance has more than 50 members.

For more, please visit: www.a4ai.org.

2) The forum will be hosted at the Chelsea Hotel - Central Area, Plot 123 Cadastral Zone A0, Central Business District, Abuja on 11 March 2014. The full event will take place between 08:30 - 15.00. Members of the media are advised to register at 8.30am, in time for the Minister's opening remarks at 9am. There will be opportunities to ask questions and conduct interviews at 11am. Speakers will include Minister of Communication Technology, the Hon. Omobola Johnson; senior officials from the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC); sectoral Ministries and other government agencies; industry representatives; leading Nigerian academics and researchers; civil society organizations; and internet campaigners.

3) A4AI's recent report on internet affordability was released in December 2013 and is available here: http://a4ai.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Affordability-Report-2013_Final-2.pdf

Contacts:

Gabe Trodd, Communications Adviser, World Wide Web Foundation, London, UK
gabe@webfoundation.org / 44 20 7193 8042/ Skype: gabe784

Alice Samson, World Wide Web Foundation, Washington DC, USA
alice@webfoundation.org / Skype: samsonalice

Dillon Mann, Senior Communications Adviser, World Wide Web Foundation, Cape Town, South Africa
dillon@webfoundation.org / +27 76 238 2313 / Skype: dillon.mann