



MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS

A KEYNOTE SPEECH BY

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AT THE SECOND MEETING AND

**5TH EDITION OF THE ANNUAL INTERNET FREEDOM
HOSTED
BY A4AI NIGERIA MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COALITION**

HELD AT

THE SHERATON HOTEL, LAGOS,

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PROTOCOLS:

I am immensely grateful to God who has preserved our lives to witness this day and this occasion.

In the same vein, I also deem it a great honour and pleasure to be in your midst today on the second meeting and 5th Edition of the Annual Internet Freedom Forum

I would like to begin by sincerely thanking Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI), Nigerian Coalition and under the able coordination of Dr. Ernest C. Ndukwe, OFR former amiable Executive Vice Chairman of the Nigerian Communications Commission for inviting me to be part of this event today.

I am happy to note the enthusiasm demonstrated by A4AI to increase the affordability of both mobile and fixed-line Internet access in line with the sustainable development goals as well as provide a unified voice and coordinated focus on addressing the shared goal of open, affordable access to the Internet in Nigeria and indeed in the developing world.

I am informed that the aims of the meeting include, but not limited to the following:

- (i) Report the activities of the working groups;
- (ii) Publicly launch the African Regional and Nigeria Affordability report;
- (iii) Review how Nigeria is doing against global and regional trends; and
- (iv) Discuss and offer inputs on the intended Internet Industry Code of Practice.

I am enthusiastic that these expositions will better position the coalition in its efforts to improve Internet affordability for all Nigerians as well as positioning the country as potential leader regionally in Africa and with a global outlook on affordability.

Ladies and gentlemen, as you may be aware, the Country's ICT development blue print and National Broadband plan would be implemented holistically for the next 2 to 3 years.

I am aware that the Internet Freedom Forum(IFF) is an annual forum designed to bring together participants in Nigeria, Africa and beyond with the aim to hold discussions, enrich and broaden the conversation issues on Internet freedom and digital rights in Africa.

I am also aware this A4AI Coalition has been working round the clock to chart a way forward towards deepening broadband Internet access and affordability in the country. I consider this meeting as impetus to the realization of this noble course in our country's history.

The development of mobile services in Nigeria has been a direct result of the liberalization of the Nigerian telecommunications sector, which began in 1993 with the establishment of some Ministry's parastatals.

The Federal Government of Nigeria recognizes the urgent need to increase access to, and usage of, Internet and broadband in Nigeria. As part of its over-reaching national development plan, Vision 20:2020, which outlines the Federal Government's aim to make Nigeria a top 20 global economy by 2020, ICTs have been given a central role. In order to rationalize the work towards achieving Vision 20:2020, the Government of Nigeria has developed the new ICT strategic roadmap, which is before the Federal Executive Council for approval, it details how Nigeria will leverage ICTs to become a knowledge-based, globally competitive society by 2020.

Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI) Report shows that high cost of broadband may hinder the Achievement of UN Global of Universal Internet Access by 2020.

In order to accelerate progress, the Ministry is working round the clock to set a more ambitious target for getting broadband prices down. The report

serves as a wake-up call to us in the Ministry. A lot of work needs to be done; immediate collaborative action is required — let's work together to build open and competitive markets that can drive affordability, applicability, availability and accessibility (4As).

A stakeholder consultation on the establishment of an Internet industry code of practice has been approved and the NCC will soon invite all affected and interested stakeholders for consultation as part of our internet Governance functions. The Ministry, through the NCC seeks inputs from stakeholders in the development of a code of practice in support of an open internet. Ministry favours a multistakeholder model of engagement in the process of policy development for Internet Governance. The code of practice seeks, among other things, to:

- (i) Establish best practices for Internet Governance in Nigeria in line with emerging issues and global trends; and
- (ii) Provide transparent rules for the assignment and classification of Internet content.

The Ministry has completed plans to and will soon sign and renew a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with A4AI for the next dispensation. Given the importance of this Meeting and the Forum to the activities of the Ministry and in pursuance of Mr. President's stance on using ICTs as bedrock to the Change Agenda and Development, I implore you, therefore, to come up with new innovative ideas, tangible and actionable outcomes from this Meeting and Forum given the pedigree of the participants for the Ministry's consideration.

Let me add at this juncture that the Broadband Council has been reconstituted and consideration for A4AI representation will be made. I want to charge you that Local Content is very important for use of the internet and that importance of digital literacy cannot be over emphasized in the 21st century.

I implore you to ensure that millions of Nigerian users come online and to work toward achieving the global goal (SDG 9c) of Universal and Affordable access by 2020.

As I conclude, I take this opportunity to applaud A4AI's efforts and contributions in the development and growth of the country through this noble initiative. The Ministry of Communications, under my watch will continue to partner with government at all levels, and other stakeholders, in its bid to move the telecoms industry forward.

I would like once again to congratulate the National Coordinator and his team for organizing this timely and commendable meeting. You must always remember that we must put the interest of our nation first in all things that we do. Nigeria needs the best and only the best is good enough for Nigeria.

It is now my honour and pleasure to declare the 2nd Meeting and the 5th Edition of Internet Freedom Forum open.

I wish you all fruitful deliberations and may the Almighty Allah (God) continue to bless Nigeria. I thank you.

I thank you all for your attention.