



**MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AN ADDRESS
DELIVERED
BY
DR. ABDUR-RAHEEM ADEBAYO SHITTU, FNCS
HONOURABLE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
AT THE
A4AI- NIGERIA BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE
FORUM 2018
THE LAGOS CONTINENTAL ,
LAGOS
30TH OCTOBER 2018**

Protocol

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen. I am indeed delighted to to give this address at this all important event on broadband infrastructure in Lagos.

As Minister I have witnessed the growing levels of development in the ICT sector ranging from Telecoms services to digital services. According to the latest A4AI Affordability Report, Nigeria meets the 1 for 2 affordability target, showing that the price of 1GB of prepaid mobile data dropped over 75.% over since 2015! This is indeed a major accomplishment! The potential of ICT development in Nigeria is immense and the landscape is changing with budding startups as well as discussions on Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, blockchain and other new innovations in the digital space in Nigeria. Let me remind us here that, underpinning these innovations is infrastructure development everywhere in the country. Nigeria boasts of submarine cable landings at the shores of the Country with a total capacity of over 11 Terabits, the liberalization and deregulation of the Telecommunications sector, increased internet penetration and the increased ownership and utilization of mobile broadband access. E- government services are on the rise facilitating the ease of doing business and providing needed public services.

However, his high demand for quality broadband access has exerted pressure on existing infrastructure creating an urgent need to explore creative ways of seeking out innovations and partnerships to bridge the access gaps in the country.

As of 2017, Nigeria had less than 50,000 base stations and urgently needs at least seventy thousand (70,000) to eighty thousand(80,000) telecommunication base stations to substantially cover the broadband needs of the nation. We need to ensure broadband needs of the nation are actualized with an appropriate ICT infrastructure design that incorporates a National Broadband Infrastructure Backbone, Metro/Intra-City Fibre Network both aerial and via ducts , Last mile services including Fibre to the premises (FTTP), community networks, TV white spaces, satellite and wireless network as well as WiFi connectivity amongst others.

The Ministry remains committed to increase broadband penetration to 30% before the current plan expires and is keen to accelerate internet access to many unserved areas especially rural areas, and to connect rural communities to economic opportunities through improved infrastructure.

In order to ensure this rapid development of infrastructure in the ICT sector, the Ministry in conjunction with stakeholders, developed the Nigerian National Broadband Plan and

Strategy 2013 – 2018 to facilitate broadband infrastructure development and deepen broadband penetration. In addition, the Nigerian National Broadband Council was inaugurated to ensure regular review of the progress of the broadband plan. As Chairman of the Broadband Council since 4th May 2017, we have facilitated coordination and collaboration in the delivery of the plan, as well as highlighted area of program adjustment to permit the realization of new and emerging opportunities. As the review of the Broadband plan and strategy approaches, the Council will be looking for new ideas and solutions to improve the revised plan and accelerate the achievement of a knowledge economy by 2020.

In response to concerns raised by stakeholders over the challenges faced against ICT infrastructure rollout, especially the multiple and exorbitant Right of Way (RoW) charges, my Ministry set up a Ministerial Committee to develop an appropriate document to articulate issues and recommend mitigating strategies. The Ministerial Committee completed its work and made valuable recommendations which were shared with all stakeholders. Some of the recommendations include the review of all existing Legislations, Acts, Institutional and Regulatory Framework, especially the National ICT Policy and the National Communications Act 2003, to be updated with an insertion/incorporation of a section on Right of Way. We know the implementation of this is far from easy, but rest assured the Ministry is keen to work to resolve this challenge across states. We continue to engage in many crucial conversations around identifying solutions to this and other challenges .

We commend the Alliance for Affordable Internet, A4AI, whom we have invited to the Nigerian National Broadband Council, for convening this important forum to deliberate on some of these existing challenges on how to rapidly accelerate Infrastructure across Nigeria. My Ministry looks forward to receiving the important recommendations on the gaps that exist within the currently policy and strategy and how these can be bridged to fast track progress towards bringing affordable broadband to all corners of Nigeria

Thank you!