THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA

FEDERAL MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

KEYNOTE ADDRESS DELIVERED
BY

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At

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PROTOCOLS

It really is a delight to be here with you at the annual NCS conference and a special priviledge to be invited to give the keynote address.

I would like to start by taking this opportunity on behalf of the Ministry to thank the President, Executives and members of the NCS for the collaborative way in which you have worked with the Ministry since its creation. I know that a number of you in this room were instrumental to the creation of the Ministry; you made the case for the federal government to really focus on the IT industry as a key enabler of national socio-economic growth, job and wealth creation.

The last time I addressed you at a gathering was at a dinner in 2011 where I made some brief remarks about what we were doing in the Ministry to move the IT industry forward but let me again take the opportunity of this gathering to preface my keynote with a few comments about the state of the IT industry in Nigeria, the implications of this renewed focus on the industry and what the NCS as the largest association of the IT industry may want to concern itself with over the coming years. These preliminary comments will also hopefully put the keynote address in the proper context for deliberations as the conference proceeds.

At the maiden ICT stakeholders forum in September 2011 our assessment of the industry could be summarised as follows:

A sector with tremendous opportunity for growth and job creation which is being hampered and constrained by significant fragmentation of the local industry resulting in a predominance of small firms with little market share, dominance of multi-nationals in almost every sector, a largely undeveloped software industry, a hardware industry that has struggled to grow and prosper and a poor supply of skills and talent to the industry.

Further validation of this assesment is borne out by our low position on the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Networked Readiness Index (NRI) for 2013[1].

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[1] http://edit.weforum.org/reports/global-information-technology-report-2013

This index can be viewed as a proxy for the level of a country's ICT uptake and support for growth and jobs.

In the current survey, Nigeria is ranked 114 out of 144 countries with an aggregate NRI score of 3.27 out of 7.

We score particularly badly in the **Readiness sub-index**, which aggregates scores on "Infrastructure & Digital Content", "Affordability" and "Skills" where we are ranked 123 out of 144 with an aggregate score of 3.02 out of 7.

We again score poorly in the **Usage sub-index** where scores on "Individual usage", "Government usage" and "Business usage" are aggregated and here, our score of 3.04 out of 7 places us at 108 out of 144 surveyed countries.

Our slightly better score of 3.66 out of 7 in the **Environment sub-index**, which aggregates scores on "Political & Regulatory Environment" and "Business & Inovation Environment" places us at 94 out of the 144 surveyed countries.

Finally, the **Impact sub-index** aggregates "Economic Impact" and "Social Impact" of ICT in Nigeria. Here, our aggregated score of 3.34 out of 7 places us 79 out of the 144 surveyed countries.

Collectively, these indicators paint a grim picture of the current quality of our ICT infrastructure as well as the existing utilization trends in ICT but they are also of great help to both government and the private sector in developing effective policies and strategies to move the industry forward.

In the light of this assessment and our global rankings on the NRI , the Ministry's priorities for turning the industry around were centred around four pillars:

1. Connecting Nigeria – building ICT infrastructure

2. Connecting Nigerians – ensuring Nigerians have affordable access to the infrastructure

3. Local content – increasing the participation of local firms in the sector and increasing the supply of local skills and talent to the sector

4. ICTs in government – using ICTs to improve the transparency, efficiency and productivity in governance and citizen engagement.

Addressing these priorities together in a cohesive, comprehensive and collaborative manner and being willing and ready to not only do things differently as an industry but do different things should result in the realisation of the potential in this sector, increased contribution of IT to GDP and of course a higher ranking in the WEF NRI index.

Specifically related to the theme of this conference are the Government Usage and Business Usage indicators of the NRI. Our rankings on these indicators tell us that government, businesses and by implication citizens in Nigeria are poor users of ICTs. So let us now focus on how we can improve our performance on these indicators which incidentally is one of the themes of this conference ''egovernment and National Security" and the title of my keynote address.

"Egovernment" refers to the use of ICTS by government agencies to transform (and improve) the traditional government to business or government to citizen interactions. Using ICTs this way can result in more efficient delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, improved document management and archiving, citizen empowerment through access to information, and more efficient government management. The increased transparency inherent in this model can also reduce corruption, grow revenues and significantly reduce costs.

Egovernment therefore aims to make the interaction between government and citizens (G2C), government and business enterprises (G2B), and inter-agency relationships (G2G) more friendly, convenient, transparent, and inexpensive.

In Nigeria, the traditional G2C and G2B interface still largely takes place in government offices with direct physical interaction required between government, citizens and businesses. We are all familiar with the long lead times and tedium associated with getting information about government services and procuring government services.

The Corporate Affairs Commision, which is the first G2B service that any newly formed company will experience is a typical example where multiple forms can

be downloaded but the most elementary service, a name search has to be done manually.

The Integrated Personnel & Payroll Information System (IPPIS), a key G2G service gives much better news about the work that has been done in e-government. IPPIS has discovered about 46,000 "ghost workers" and saved the government approximately N 119 Bn so far. 215 MDAs have been captured onto the IPPIS system and another 321 intended to be added by year-end with more savings expected.

The Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS) manages the budget execution process and helps identify and address sources of leakage in budget execution. While only about 60% of the Federal Budget is currently managed by the platform, GIFMIS has so far identified and recovered about N 34 Bn in illegal accounts.

IPPIS and GIFMIS are a clear demonstration of the transparency and cost reduction benefits of egovernment. What is now needed is a more holistic and comprehensive approach to delivering egovernment and reaping the full benefits for businesses, for government and for citizens.

The Ministry's approach to egovernment is in a sense a building block approach which I would like to shed more light on at this point.

First of all, we have the ongoing development of a robust, secure and shared IT infrastructure managed by Galaxy Backbone plc, that serves as the platform through which egovernment services are deployed. This infrastructure is certified at the ISO 27001 standard in information security management and enables us to take advantage of economies of scale – removing the duplication in IT infrastructure (especially data centres) across MDAs and creating centres of excellence for skills. Galaxy Backbone's shared infrastructure recently won first place at the 2013 UN public service award in the Promoting the "Whole of Government Approaches in the Information age" category – a testimony and a validation of the appropriateness of this approach.

The second building block – skills and talent to manage the effective and efficient deployment of a substantial IT budget. Government is not immune to the poor supply of skills and talent to the industry. This challenge is further

compounded by the dispersal of our IT skills and talent across the various MDAs with little knowledge of the available skills and capacity and few opportunities for taking advantage of inherent IT synergies. As an association of IT professionals you will be pleased to hear that we are now working to professionalise the pool of IT skills in federal government. An ICT cadre has been established to be domiciled in the Ministry of Communication Technology, allowing for the development of a highly qualified IT workforce within government. More importantly we have created a Council of ICT Heads, that meets monthly to ensure synergy and collaboration across Ministries and reduce duplication in applications and deliver more value for federal governments IT spend.

This Council of IT Heads will now be the key drivers of the egovernment agenda for the federal government and I have charged them with the delivery of two immediate priorities. First of all the rollout of a customised and standardised template for all federal ggovernment websites to set citizen and customer expectations better when interacting with MDAs online and the hosting of all websites on the .gov.ng domain. Secondly the rollout of email addresses to all federal civil servants (yourname@fedcs.gov.ng) for internal and external communication. These two actions will give citizens confidence they are dealing with bona fide government officials and build trust and confidence in egovernment applications and systems an important factor in implementing an egovernment agenda and ofcourse reducing the well publicised "my oga at the top" syndrome and other job scam syndromes.

The Ministry recently deployed the services portal – services.gov.ng – offering a limited number of new online services from the Ministries of Agriculture, Communication Technology, Education, Health as well as Industry, Trade & Investment and also providing a ''single window'' through which existing egovernment services can be accessed. Traffic to the portal is still expectedly low but we expect that with the deployment of a number of high traffic services, such as some of the services of the corporate affairs commission, increased awareness of this portal and increased confidence of citizens to transact their business with government online we should begin to see some efficiency and transparency gains. We will continue to build on the services available on this portal

In order to professionalize and better manage possible first-level telephone contact between government and citizens, a 150-seat call centre will be commissioned later on this year. While the call centre is fully outsourced to the private sector, 250 Servicom staff from Ministries have been trained to provide second level assistance in the event tha the call agent at the call centre cannot address the citizen's enquiry.

I would also like to touch briefly on our Open Government Initiative where we plan to release non-sensitive and non-classified datasets online in a pro-active manner and under the Freedom of Information Act. These data sets will be turned over to developers to mine and create relevant and customized applications that will ultimately benefit the citizenry and boost our job creation efforts.

Deploying egovernment services on a robust and secure platform is one thing but the success of any egovernment agenda is also premised on an additional critical success factors.

The issue of ease of use of delivery platforms that facilitate acceptance becomes quite importantr. Literacy, conventional as well as digital is now more important than before and it is the government's responsibility to ensure that citizens are given every opportunity to participate in the language and format most appropriate to the environment where services will be accessed – internet, voice, sms.

Local language options have to be added to the services portal as digital penetration is improved so as to ensure optimal citizen acceptance. Local language call centre operators, customized touch screen terminals or appropriate interface will be provided to ease access.

To make our e-government initiatives successful, citizens must also be confident about transacting their business over the internet or other ICT channels. The internet must be considered a safe and secure place with citizens confident to provide sensitive information online. We must also have secure ways of working and recourse to the rule of law to discourage potential offenders and punish actual ones. This is where our cyber security considerations must be applied. The recent experience with "Paddy hacker"

Vice President's speech and is only one example of what we can expect if we do not tighten up our cyber security.

As already mentioned by the Vice President, the Cyber Crime bill being prepared for submission to the National Assembly by the Ministry of Justice is being designed to address just this and also has a clause that will enable the President to designate key ICT resources as Critical National Information Infrastructure.

The executive bill will take on board the corrections recommended from earlier bills that did not make it through and will ensure a coordinated approach by all arms of government as well as our security agencies - empowering them to track and deter any individuals found guilty of misusing privileged access to information.

The national ICT policy proposes the establishement on Cyber Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) and the NCC has recently signed an MoU with the ITU to establish a regional cyber security centre in Nigeria to facilitate collaboration on combating cyber threats at national and regional levels.

The apparent proliferation of bio-metric databases at the national and sub-national level – key infrastructure required to deliver egovernment services to citizens raises concerns about trust in government's ability to store and manage vast amounts of sensitive information. The protection of citizen online activity will mean investments in systems that reduce the possibility of identity theft and robust privacy laws that protect citizen information that is available online.

This has been a very topical issue especially with the recent revelation that US telephone companies have routinely been handing meta-data over to their National Security Agency for mining. This is proof that the challenges we face in Nigeria today are not peculiar to ourselves alone and the application of ICTs to help safeguard the nation is a fairly common approach.

But there is also an on-going debate about how much information should rest in government hands and I am sure you will contribute to this debate during your sub-theme on "National Database as a Core Field of National Security".

We look forward to sharing the results of your discussions on the best ways for us in this part of the world to leverage ICTs to improve our national security.

Finally, I would like to pause and acknowledge the Osun State government for the many ICT industry initiatives they are pioneering under the leadership of Ogbeni (Engr.) Rauf Aregbesola.

We continue to engage the private sector in all of our initiatives and will take every opportunity to stress the fact that the Federal Government and the Ministry of Communication Technology see the private sector as implementing partners as we work to create an enabling environment for efficient, secure ICT services that will benefit Nigeria.

Thank you