

REMARKS BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER/EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN OF NCC, ENGR. E. C. A. NDUKWE AT THE COMMISSIONING OF DIGITAL AWARENESS PRGRAM (DAP) IN ZARIA, KADUNA STATE ON THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2009.

Your Excellency the Governor of Kaduna State, Rep. by the Hon. Commissioner for Education.

Chairman, Senate Committee on Communications, Senator Sylvester Anyanwu and all the Distinguished Senators present.

Honourable Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee and other Honourable Members Present and Members of the State House of Assembly present.

Our Special Guest of Honour, the Honourable Minister of State for Information and Communications, Alhaji Aliyu Ikra Bilbis

My colleagues on the Board of the NCC

Officials of the School

Members of the Press

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my pleasure to welcome all the guests to this event which is for the commissioning of a set of information technology tools for the use of students in this institution as one of our initiatives to deepen awareness and use of ICT in Nigeria.

Today, we live in an information age characterized by the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) resources in nearly all aspects of human endeavor. ICT tools have taken center stage in shaping the world economy and will continue to do so far into the foreseeable future.

In Nigeria, some modest achievements have been recorded in our drive to ensure Digital inclusion and ensure that the Nigerian citizen has the necessary facilities to be an active member of global information economy.

Today, Nigerian has recorded an impressive phone subscription with more than 64 Million Active Lines by end of December 2008, raising the teledensity to over 40%. Considering our history in this sector, this is no doubt a remarkable growth.

However, with the current population of Nigeria at about 140 million, we cannot rest on our oars. Every Nigerian citizen is entitled to the basic communication tools that are necessary to live in an information age. We therefore still have a long road to cover. We also live in a world where the average citizen is in demand for more than basic voice telephony. Today demand for broadband and Internet resources for e-health, e-education, e-commerce, e-business, e-office, -e-everything-, has continued to rise, and Nigeria must rise up to this challenge.

It is in response to this that the Nigerian Communications Commission initiated the Digital Awareness Program (DAP) and the Digital Access Programme for Tertiary Institutions, ADAPTI, to provide academic institutions and their neighbouring communities across the country with ICT facilities.

Under the Program, the selected institution is provided with computer laboratories fully equipped with about 20 computers, furniture and Internet facilities. In most locations, these facilities are backed-up with structural renovation of buildings and supply of air conditioners and power generators. In addition, the Program provides basic training for the teachers and students to enable them effectively use the facilities provided.

The first phase of the Program was launched in October 2004 with the selection of twelve educational institutions spread across all the geopolitical zones of Nigeria. Today about 221 schools and colleges have benefited from this initiative. This is being complimented by the School Access Programme in which the Universal Service Provision

Fund Secretariat has targeted for provision of similar facilities and infrastructure.

In today's information age, Computer literacy and information literacy are requisite skills.

A recent publication by UNESCO reported: "studies indicate that although learning to read and write requires significant guidance and a degree of formalized education, learning to use a computer and other modern technologies can be an intuitive process. The "Hole-in-the-Wall" study, for example, which set up computers in public spaces in slum areas of India, found that curious children in these areas became proficient in browsing the Internet and using certain computer programs within days, without any formal teaching. This example demonstrates that, for children at least, it is possible to gain basic computer skills without formalized assistance."

What this indicates is that if introduced early, ICTs can easily become part of the everyday tool of the young people who will grow to become active and productive members of the emerging knowledge societies. This has been the motivation for initiating DAP. In the case of ADAPTI, we have targeted the professors and teachers who impart knowledge on the students to be digitally compliant so that they will develop the necessary skills to use these facilities to teach and also the enthusiasm to apply latest ICT experience within the academic communities.

To the school authorities, we recommend that the facilities provided are used maximally both staff and students. The Internet is world's biggest source of knowledge today. The World Wide Web, www has limitless resource and we request urge you to employ this opportunity to the fullest.

We are also anxious that this program is sustained and perhaps be made available to the local community around the school. In this

regard, we advise that the Management of the school should put in place modalities for partially commercializing the centre to generate funds to defray recurrent running costs such as renewal of bandwidth subscription, fueling of the generator, maintenance and repairs of the equipment.

On behalf of the Board, Management and staff of the Commission, we thank you all for coming to this event and wish all those that will use this facility, a digitally enhanced life.

Thank you and God bless.

Engr. Ernest Ndukwe, OFR
CEO/EVC of NCC