
**A WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN, NCC,
ENGR. ERNEST C. NDUKWE,
AT THE STAKEHOLDERS FORUM ON CONFIRMATION OF REASONABLENESS OF
SERVICE FEES;
AT THE NCC HEAD OFFICE, ABUJA, NIGERIA. 12TH FEBRUARY 2009**

1. Representatives of the Telecom Operators,
2. Representatives of Financial Institutions,
3. Representatives of the International Service Providers,
4. Representatives of the Central Bank of Nigeria,
5. Representatives of the Customs & Excise Division,
6. Members of staff of the NCC,
7. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this very important stakeholders' Forum on confirmation of Reasonableness of Service fees paid in foreign exchange by the telecoms industry.

As you are aware, the Commission has always sought the views of stakeholders in developing policies and regulations to guide this dynamic industry. We have embraced participatory regulation as a means of addressing issues and crafting industry regulations. As a result, our regulatory interventions generally reflect the opinions of the majority of the consumers of ICT products and services in Nigeria.

In year 2002, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) requested the Commission to assist its forex operations by confirming the reasonableness of fees invoiced by overseas

service providers, to the Commission's licensees. Considering the special nature of telecom transactions, the Commission was charged with approving and issuing of reasonableness certificates for all intangible telecoms transactions, denominated in foreign currencies.

In its usual approach to issues, the Commission held an industry consultative forum in 2003 where an improved structure was developed to guide the processing of approval for invisible/intangible telecoms trade transactions. This structure was unanimously agreed as the structure to guide the procedure, and it is the procedure now used in the processing of all applications for reasonableness for operators and service operators.

NCC is of the opinion that although the current certificate of reasonableness is efficient, it could nonetheless still be improved upon, and necessary training provided to the newer entrants in the telecoms market. This Forum has become even more important as the Commission is witnessing an increase in the number of errors in the applications we receive which result in avoidable delays.

This Forum has therefore been put together as a medium where all the relevant stakeholders can brainstorm on restructuring the current procedures for granting a certificate of reasonableness for intangible/invisible services. This medium would also provide insight on the role the Commission plays in the transactions; offer participants an opportunity to share their experiences with others stakeholders; as well as provide a forum where the set down procedures for swift processing are further clarified.

Once again, on behalf of the Nigerian Communications Commission and the Board of Commissioners, I thank you for honoring this invitation and wish to remind you

that your views are of critical importance in the development of an efficient process for confirmation of reasonableness.

We assure you that as with other areas of focus of the Commission, the Commission in this matter will also continue to work tirelessly to ensure a vibrant telecoms environment. We are not unaware of the current global economic downturn and its potential impact on our various businesses and other such considerations. We assure you that we will do our best, in line with Government policy directives, to soften its impact on your businesses.

I wish you excellent deliberations and thank you once again for coming.

God bless you.

Engr. Ernest Ndukwe, OFR

Executive Vice Chairman/CEO

February 12, 2009