

**SPEECH BY**  
**ENGR. ERNEST C. A. NDUKWE,**  
**EXECUTIVE VICE-CHAIRMAN, NCC AT THE**  
**DIGITAL MOBILE LICENCE AWARD CEREMONY**  
**HELD AT THE SHERATON HOTEL & TOWERS, ABUJA**  
**ON FRIDAY, MARCH 23, 2001**

On behalf of the Nigerian Communications Commission, I am most delighted to welcome you all to this formal presentation ceremony of the Digital Mobile Licences to the successful companies that participated in the Digital Mobile Licence Auction that was held from January 17 - 19, 2001.

We thank the Almighty God that we are all here today to witness this modest ceremony which marks the final stage of the licencing process that started on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 2000 when the Information Memorandum was published on the NCC website.

We have called this a formal presentation ceremony because all the successful bidders have been advised in writing of the award of the licences soon after receipt of full payment for the licences. What

they will be receiving today are the full Licence documents that spell out the terms and conditions of the Licences.

For us at NCC it has been a very busy period from the 16<sup>th</sup> of November when it also started to date to the 21<sup>st</sup> of December 2000 when eight applications were received with only 5 companies paying the mandatory \$20 million deposit within the time stipulated.

All five companies were subsequently prequalified to go to the action stage on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 2001. This was then followed by series of internal mock auctions within NCC to enable us perfect our strategies and processes. I remember I had to increase the number of internal mock auctions by one to ensure that we left nothing to chance.

By the time the bidders arrived for their mock auction on Monday the 15<sup>th</sup> of January we thought were all fully prepared for them.

I must thank the bidders for their good behaviour during the mock auctions. One lesson we learnt very quickly was that the bidders had a lot of appetite.

Less than one hour after they entered their bid rooms, requests started flowing in to the auction control team for all kinds of food and drinks. They had cleared the snacks that were provided in the rooms which was for the whole day!

We also received weird requests for items such as sharing stick, tooth brush and tooth paste.

The Auction proper started on schedule at 10.00 am on the 17<sup>th</sup> of January and ended on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January at 3.00 p.m. with three winners and a price of \$285 million.

Provisional licences were granted to the three winners and NITEL too on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January requiring them to pay the licence fees within business 14 days.

Honourable Minister, Distinguish Ladies and Gentlemen, the three Companies, Econet, MTN Communications Ltd. met their payment obligation in full and have therefore been awarded the Digital Mobile Licences to enable them roll out their network for the benefit of the Nigeria people, while delivering value to their shareholders.

One major feature of the licencing process that was adopted by NCC is that of openness and Consultation. The licence document that will be present today have been produced after series of Consultations that started on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 2000. The licence sets out clearly the rights and obligations of the mobile service provider, which we believe, will result in a more predictable regulatory environment.

Permit me ladies and gentlemen to invite the Chairman of the Board  
Alhaji Ahmed Joda to make a few remarks.

Thank you.

**ENGR. ERNEST C. A. NDUKWE**  
Executive Vice Chairman