

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN, NIGERIAN COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE NIGERIA DIGITAL ECONOMY REPORT BY GSMA ON 9<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2024 HELD AT THE TRANSCORP HILTON HOTEL ABUJA**

**PROTOCOLS**

- The Honorable Minister of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, Dr. Bosun Tijanni
- The Honorable Minister of Budget and National Planning, Senator Atiku Bagudu
- The Chief Executive of GalaxyBackbone, Professor Ibrahim Adeyanju
- The CEOs of 9mobile (Juergen Peschel), Airtel (Carl Cruz), and MTN (
- The Executive Vice Chairman, Globacom, Bella Disu
- The Ag. Country Director for Nigeria, at the World Bank, Taimur Samad
- The Head of Sub-Saharan Africa, GSMA, Angela Wamola
- The Chairman of ALTON, Gbenga Adebayo
- Members of the Media Present
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted to be here today on the occasion of the launch of the Nigeria Digital Economy Report by the GSMA.

The GSMA—an organization that focuses on advancing the development and adoption of mobile technology—is presenting this detailed report covering the potentials of the telecommunications sector towards driving economic growth in Nigeria through the digitalization of the economy.

This report comes at an important time when the Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, has set in motion its Strategic Plan with the goal of harnessing the power of technology in order to bring about all-round development of the nation's economy. It is in the light of this vision that ambitious targets have been set, such as increasing the country's broadband penetration rate to 70% by the end of 2025, to providing broadband coverage to at least 80% of the country's population, especially the underserved and unserved by the end of 2027, as well as securing between 300 to 500% increase in broadband investment by the end of 2027, among several others. Achieving these targets require having a bird's-eye insight of the nation's digital economy, in order to drive the appropriate initiatives that would ensure we meet these targets.

The Communications Sector (which is regulated by the NCC) provides the infrastructure upon which the Digital Economy thrives. Communications infrastructure, including networks of cables, towers, and satellites as well as spectrum resources that enables the seamless transmission of data, voice, and video across vast distances. This connectivity is essential for individuals, businesses, and governments to communicate and access digital services. Seamless connectivity to the internet is the foundation for a robust and thriving digital economy.

As a Commission, we are taking innovative steps that ensure a more effective delivery of our regulatory mandate, and by extension empowering the Digital Economy in Nigeria.

Permit me to briefly touch on some of the areas we are working on in this regard:

As you all are aware, the Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy has recently unveiled the **National Broadband Alliance for Nigeria (NBAN)**, a multi-stakeholder collaboration to promote nationwide broadband and internet access. This alliance aims to address major sectoral challenges such as fiber network challenges as well as ensure return on investment by tackling the low adoption of broadband services, especially in rural and underserved communities. The Secretariat of the NBAN is domiciled in the Commission.

The Commission has also embarked upon **a number of advocacy initiatives** to address long-term challenges in the sector, which include the following amongst others;

- a. **Advocacy in designating Communications Infrastructure as Critical National Infrastructure.** We have made significant progress in our efforts towards ensuring the designation of Communications Infrastructure as Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) consequently ensuring their protection and resilience.
- b. **On Right of Way (RoW) Charges:** The Commission vide its advocacy has succeeded in persuading (6) six states to waive their RoW charges, with a significant number of states also adopting the harmonized charge of N145 per linear meter.
- c. **One of the key challenges that the industry faces is the issue of Multiple Taxation.** We are currently engaging with the Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms towards addressing multiple taxation issues and streamlining the tax regime for the telecoms sector in Nigeria.

Of important mention as we speak on regulatory innovations to empowering Nigeria's Digital Future is the use of DATA differently. The Commission today has also recently developed a **Data Collection Framework** which guides the collection of data on issues such as Quality of Service, Consumer complaints among others. This data is providing us with the requisite data to take informed decisions towards ensuring a thriving communications sector and by extension digital economy.

Our Data-Centric Approach is so far bringing in the desired results:

For instance, the analysis of performance data submitted by operators has helped us highlight the crucial role of the entire value-chain in delivering Quality of Service to our consumers.

Through this Data centric approach, we have clearer insights from across the entire value chain to identify problem areas for optimal and timely interventions for improving the overall user experience.

Lastly, Commission is also currently undertaking a **review of its Regulatory Instruments and licensing framework** to ensure that they are in line with the current realities. An example of such is the review of the Quality-of-Service Regulations to incorporate KPIs for 5G and include KPIs for the Colocation Service Providers (TowerCos). It is also pertinent to add that the Commission has now adopted a broader approach towards ensuring **Quality of Experience**, as opposed to the narrow approach of just ensuring **Quality of Service**.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the commendable effort undertaken by the GSMA in compiling and presenting the Nigeria Digital Economy Report, which is being officially unveiled today. Rest assured, the Commission will meticulously examine the report, and extract invaluable insights to inform our strategic decisions and initiatives.

Thank you very much.

**Dr. Aminu Maida**  
**EVC/CEO**  
**Nigerian Communications Commission**