

**WELCOME ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE INDUSTRY-FOCUSED  
STAKEHOLDER'S ENGAGEMENT SESSION OF THE UNIVERSAL  
SERVICE PROVISION FUND (USPF) BY DR. AMINU MAIDA – EVC,  
NCC**

**Marriott Hotel, Ikeja Lagos  
Thursday, March 13, 2025**

**PROTOCOL**

- The Honorable Minister of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, Dr. Bosun Tijani
- The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Communications, Innovations and Digital Economy, Engr. Faruk Yusuf Yabo
- ICT Commissioners
- Chief Executives and their representatives
- Management and staff of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (UK FCDO)
- Secretary of the USPF
- Notable industry players
- Development partners
- Speakers
- Trade associations
- Distinguished guests

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to this pivotal stakeholder engagement event, organized under the auspices of the Universal Service Provision Fund (USPF) in collaboration with the ITU and supported by the UK FCDO. This engagement, themed: ***‘Strengthening Partnership for Sustainable Telecommunication Infrastructure in the Unserved and Underserved Communities: Collaborating for Sustainable Growth,’*** reflects our collective commitment to ensuring equitable access to telecommunications services for all Nigerians, especially those in unserved and underserved communities.

Today’s meeting is particularly aimed at bringing key industry stakeholders together to provide valuable insights on strategies that can be adopted to enhance USPF Interventions and serve as a feedback mechanism to build partnerships for Nigeria’s digital future. It goes without saying that the USPF acknowledges the crucial role of

collaboration, strategic partnerships and complementary efforts to achieve sustainable development.

Additionally, the evolving telecommunications landscape necessitates innovative and collaborative approaches to ensure long-term viability in delivering connectivity to unserved and underserved populations.

### **The Role of the USPF in Expanding Access**

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), through the USPF, has been at the forefront of initiatives aimed at providing universal access and universal service. These efforts align with broader national and global goals, including bridging the digital divide, promoting universal access, fostering economic growth and social inclusion, and achieving Sustainable Development Goals “SDGs 4” (Quality Education) and 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure).

Over time, the USPF has successfully implemented several projects under its access and connectivity programmes. Given the focus of this event, it is important to highlight key connectivity projects such as the deployment of Base Transceiver Stations (BTS), Backbone Transmission and Infrastructure, amongst others. This engagement serves as a vital platform to discuss practical strategies to enhance the impact of these projects through strengthened partnerships.

Without doubt, to achieve digital inclusion, government agencies, mobile network operators, infrastructure providers, equipment manufacturers, development partners, and telecom trade groups must work closely together. It is for this reason that a multi-stakeholder approach is essential to:

1. Explore innovative financing models to attract investment in rural telecommunications.
2. Leverage emerging technologies and alternative power solutions for sustainable connectivity.
3. Promote policies that incentivize collaborative participation in connectivity projects.

### **Call to Action**

I want to use this platform today, to urge all stakeholders to take decisive steps toward strengthening partnerships. Let us harness our collective expertise, resources, and innovative capabilities to build a resilient and sustainable telecommunication infrastructure that will empower millions of Nigerians. We must remember that collaboration remains the cornerstone of sustainable development in this sector.

Crucially, I must mention that our solutions must be tailored to address local challenges/needs and align with current realities.

I am confident that the deliberations from this engagement will lead to actionable solutions that will drive progress, foster economic development, and ultimately transform lives through connectivity in the most remote corners of our nation.

## **Conclusion**

Once again, I thank you all for your dedication to this cause. Together, we can build a future where digital connectivity is a fundamental right, not a privilege. Let us remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that no community is left in the digital dark.

Thank you, and I look forward to productive discussions ahead.