

**OPENING REMARKS BY DR. AMINU MAIDA, EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN,
NIGERIAN COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION, AT THE WEST AFRICA
TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORS ASSEMBLY (WATRA) TECHNICAL
COMMITTEE MEETING ON THE VALIDATION OF THE WATRA STRATEGIC
PLAN 2026–2030 ON 26th –29th JANUARY 2026**

PROTOCOL

- The Chairman of the West Africa Telecommunications Regulators Assembly (WATRA) Dr. Herry Mané, [Chairman, National Regulatory Authority for Information and Communication Technologies (ARN-ICT) of Guinea-Bissau.]
- The Executive Secretary of WATRA, Engr. Aliyu Yusuf Aboki,
- Distinguished heads of delegations and representatives of WATRA Member States,
- Designated Technical Committee Members,
- Distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning.

I would begin these remarks by acknowledging the Chairman of WATRA, Dr. Herry Mané, for his continued stewardship, the WATRA Executive Secretary, Engr. Aliyu Yusuf Aboki and his team, for their diligent management of the Secretariat. Their commitment to this assembly has set the stage for the constructive and collaborative work that lies before us.

I must also commend the Secretariat for its diligent coordination and steady implementation of the 2022–2025 Strategic Plan, which was designed to strengthen cooperation, deepen knowledge sharing, and advance regional integration within our sub-region. The successful conclusion of that plan provides a strong foundation for the work before us today.

Our gathering marks a natural sequel to the end of the 2022–2025 Strategic Plan. We are convened to consider and endorse the draft WATRA Strategic Plan for 2026–2030, which has emerged from extensive work and documentation produced by the various WATRA technical subgroups. Those deliberations form the bedrock of the proposals before us and will shape WATRA's direction, priorities, and impact over the next five years.

As National Regulatory Authorities, we have continued to superintend the West Africa communications and digital ecosystems, which is evolving at an unprecedented pace and contributing to socioeconomic development of our countries. As part of the global ecosystem, we are at a point where rapidly evolving technologies in the ICT sector—particularly in space and satellite communications, as well as the Internet of Things—are playing a vital role in connecting the world, driving economic growth, and enabling communication across borders.

The fast-disruptive world of the communications industry has witnessed convergence of diverse technological advancements with the potential of reshaping our future. Therefore, emerging technologies, increasing demand for broadband access, national and cybersecurity concerns, digital inclusion imperatives, and the drive toward a truly integrated regional market all present both opportunities and responsibilities for us as regulators. In this context, a strategic plan must not only respond to present realities but also anticipate future challenges. On its part, WATRA, must position itself as a proactive, relevant, and unifying regulatory platform for the sub-region.

This draft strategic plan is a proposed roadmap that reflects months of analysis, consultation, and technical work. I encourage you to scrutinize the plan against the specific needs and aspirations of your respective nations and our region.

- i. Does it address the right priorities?
- ii. Are the goals ambitious yet achievable?
- iii. Does it provide a clear framework for regional cooperation and progress?

Your perspectives will ensure that the final document truly reflects national realities, regional priorities, and our shared vision for harmonised regulation, capacity development, investment promotion, and digital transformation in West Africa. I therefore invite and encourage robust, constructive, and frank discussions throughout the sessions.

Ask the challenging questions. Share your experiences. Offer your suggestions. It is through this collaborative refinement that we will forge a strategy that is truly fit for purpose: resilient, relevant, and capable of driving inclusive digital transformation for all our citizens while advancing economic and social development in the region.

I am confident that with your esteemed contributions, we will conclude this meeting with a comprehensive and actionable Strategic Plan that we can all be proud of; a Plan that will guide our collective efforts towards a more connected, prosperous, and digitally empowered West Africa.

Once again, I thank you for honouring this invitation and for your continued dedication to the WATRA vision.

I wish us all very fruitful and successful deliberations.

Thank you.

Dr. Aminu Maida
Executive Vice Chairman/CEO
Nigerian Communications Commission