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## INTERCONNECT EXCHANGE CLEARING HOUSE

Medallion has built technologically advanced and secure interconnect switching centers that enables the exchange of telecom traffic amongst these different operators. Medallion's platform can handle varied traffic types including voice, data (SMS, Fax) and video. Medallion's infrastructure is robust and protocol independent as it enables all classes of operators to interconnect seamlessly. We handle both TDM and IP based telecom operators as well as interface with major internet exchange points to ensure that local content providers are adequately catered for.



Medallion's interconnect exchange for converged network services

## CO-LOCATION & DATA CENTER SERVICES

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providers are adequately catered for.

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- Electronic security access control
- 24 x 7 electronic circuit monitoring
- Internet connection to Tier 1 carriers
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- Mast/Tower for radio installation

## MEDALLION DATA CENTRES LIMITED

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**QitechLAN** delivers broadband Internet service across the north of Nigeria.

**QitechNET** is delivered on Nigcomsat 1R satellite using iDirect, Hughes, and Newtech on:

Ku band

Ka band &

C band

**Qitech Technologies Limited**

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Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria.

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+234 8050498532

## MDAs as engine of good governance

Government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) make up the pivot of what is the civil or public service and are therefore, the engine room of good governance. MDAs are central and inevitable to any government and good governance especially because they are important both in policy formulation and implementation.

The Special Joint Report on MDAs and Ranking by IT Edge News and Baobab Africa focuses on how much of good governance can be derived from MDAs in the last seven years as the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari winds down on its eight years after a two term constitutional mandate.

Good governance implies accountability to the citizens of a democratic polity and their involvement in decision making, implementation, and assessment.

Experts also agreed that “good governance entails effective and efficient services to the people and the use of public resources to secure the maximum welfare for the greatest number of the people. It is the provision of essential social amenities and infrastructure to enable the people realize their potentialities.”

As this Joint Special Report discovered, MDAs have several issues that weaken their capacity to deliver on their statutory mandates and by implication, good governance.

The Special Joint Report on MDAs and Ranking sought to find out how much of digital presence exists in the MDAs to speed up and create efficiency in the delivery of good governance; the number/depth of projects or initiatives executed within the development goals of President Buhari; how MDA's KPIs/ milestones have measured up to their Mission, Mandate, Vision, & Goals (MMVG); and what has been the impact of all these to the people and environment. The results were outstanding as well as shocking. We will speak in the language of the Presidential Committees set up to scrutiny the MDAs. Yes! Many MDAs need to be reworked, merged or scrapped. There are over 800 MDAs and nearly 60% of them are a waste of public resource; a financial drain on the nation.

In terms of digital presence, many of the MDAs' websites

are lacklustre billboards. In fact, they do more damage than any good to the corporate identity of the MDAs. Many of these government-owned websites are no better than promotional desks of their CEOs and not the institutions they represent as engine rooms of development held in trust for the citizens. Indeed, only few MDAs have effective websites that strengthen “institutional credibility and brand, improve user satisfaction, and save time and money in terms of speed, download and navigation.

But there are praise-worthy models. The websites of NCC (<https://www.ncc.gov.ng/>); the newly reworked NADDC (<https://naddc.gov.ng/>); NIMC (<https://nimc.gov.ng/>); NDPB (<https://ndpb.gov.ng/>); NITDA (<https://nitda.gov.ng/>); NEPC (<https://nepc.gov.ng/>); and NIPC (<https://www.nipc.gov.ng/>) were notably exciting with loads of information/content; good aesthetic outlays with robust security; and very active in terms of responding to query.

Many MDAs are not so forthcoming on projects or initiatives that could be identifiable with their development goals under President Buhari. In over two months of repeatedly seeking information from these MDAs, these government entities were not forthcoming with responses.

Many MDAs complain of lack of fund to execute their projects. They cannot do more than to just pay staff salaries and are far from achieving even 10% of their mandates. Many of these agencies are duplicitous and therefore, cannot create any impact.

The Special Joint Report on MDAs and Ranking is the start of a thought-provoking journey to use identifiable tools allowing citizens to adjudge if MDAs are functional entities or clogs to the core meaning of good governance.

MDAs are part of the “public bureaucracy whose primary function is to translate government policy into measurable outcomes. These institutions therefore cannot be ignored when the process of governance is being considered as they form the conduit as it were for the concretization of the intentions of people who legitimately hold state power.” The Special Joint Report on MDAs and Ranking will remain a continuous exercise.

Olusegun Ohimeh Oruame  
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# Downsizing MDAs to achieve original goals of development

By Dr. Joe Anuga



The process of governance is not by any means static as the issues requiring the attention of governments are processes that contain innumerable events happening at the same time and continuously creating new outcomes that demand attention. This reality is the basis for the creation of Ministries, Departments and Agencies tasked with specific objectives held together by the areas of focus that they superintend over. These institutions are part of the public bureaucracy whose primary function is to translate government policy into measurable outcomes. These institutions therefore cannot be ignored when the process of governance is being considered as they form the conduit as it were for the concretization of the intentions of people who legitimately hold state power. The importance of these institutions can however not detract from the fact that they exist to solve problems of concern by the government on behalf of the governed. They are therefore not to be left by decision makers to stray far from the objectives for which they are set up nor should they be

allowed to become new problems for the society. The reality however in Nigeria points to the fact that as of September 2022, these MDAs are now clearly a drain on public resources as they replicate each other and in many instances cannot carry out basic functions connected to the objectives behind their creation. The 2011 Orosanye Report recommended that the government prune down the MDAs from 541 to 161; that it was to abolish 38 agencies; then merge 52 agencies; and finally that the government should revert 14 agencies back to departments in their parent ministries. This was not done and as we move through September 2022, there are now over 800 MDAs in Nigeria. The reality that the Nigerian state has gone from an economy with one of the best Debt to GDP ratios in the world by 2011 to an economy teetering on the brink of a huge Debt Crises in 2022 belies that fact that there is no option but to reduce the size of the government bureaucracy and the overall cost of government. An important key to get it right with regards to the downsizing of MDAs in Nigeria is to take

into cognizance how efficient specific MDAs are. Those that are able to fulfill the objectives they were set up to meet and in the process generate resources for the government clearly prove that they are efficient. Those that creatively engage with the issues concerning the objectives of their existence to the point that they not only approximate Global Best Practices but also generate solutions that create a framework for investment in either human or material capital also show that they are efficient. However those that cannot even self-finance their existence and have become salary occupying ventures not only make human capital redundant but reflect a drain on irreplaceable and valuable material resources and must not be allowed to continue. This Joint Media Report is a humble contribution to the efforts of the President Muhammadu Buhari's efforts to harness all national resources on behalf of the governed in Nigeria.

Joe Anuga PhD - Baobab People and Economy Magazine

## To prune or not to prune down MDAs

Whether to scrap or merge some Federal Government's Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) has remained a major debate in the face of dwindling government revenue, Nigeria's rapid shift to a digital economy, and sturdy perception that many MDAs are unnecessary, even duplicitous.

Digital acceleration or transformation has remained limited in several MDAs despite so much hype about going digital or even leveraging technology to achieve some of their statutory mandates.

The term MDAs refers to Federal Government parastatals, commissions and



agencies (statutory and non-statutory). This joint report has focused only on departments and agencies not their supervisory ministries. There are well over 800 MDAs and only a fraction of these have been covered here. But the coverage offers a fair insight into the state

of affairs across the MDAs.

Most MDAs are shy to share information about their operations and practically avoid any form of public scrutiny contrary to existing statutory obligation and the Freedom of Information Act.

Of the over 800 MDAs, about 150 were contacted. In the three months of reaching out, less than 60 MDAs made any semblance of effort to respond and only five openly reached out with specific information relating to the focus areas of this Joint Media Report.

## What to do with MDAs



What to do with MDAs have occupied every government particularly since the Goodluck Jonathan era with committees and several sub-committees set up between 2014 and 2022 to provide a blueprint on reducing MDAs to manageable a number.

It is interesting that in 2011 when the then President Goodluck Jonathan set up the Presidential Committee on Restructuring and Rationalisation of Federal Government Parastatals, Commissions and Agencies, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Steve Oronsaye, there were about 541 Federal Government parastatals, commissions and agencies (statutory and non-statutory); since then while government dithered over the committee report, it did exactly the opposite of the recommendation of the Oronsaye's submission that government should reduce MDAs to 161; abolish 38 agencies; merge 52

agencies; and revert 14 agencies back to departments in their parent ministries. Since 2015, new MDAs have been created and the number has grown to above 800 to further worsen government overheads and practically forcing government to return to the original goal of shrinking the MDAs. Between June 2022 and August, several sub-committees have sat to review the previous White Paper of cutting down on MDAs.

It would appear government is now determined to implement the 2011 Oronsaye's Report and the submissions of subsequent sub-committees including the more recent Ebele Okeke Committee that was constituted to draft a White Paper on the Amal Pepple Committee report on new Parastatals, Agencies and Commissions created between 2012 and 2021.

It is clear that government is intent on

implementing the recommendations of these committees not because it necessarily desires to exercise the willpower but because the chicken has come to roost. Government is broke.

The Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Mrs. Zainab Ahmed, during a recent 'National Policy Dialogue on Corruption and Cost of Governance in Nigeria' in Abuja, stressed government's intention to prune down MDAs in order to reduce the cost of governance even as revenue dips.

Even the House of Representatives has already set up a committee to review the status of MDAs in order to establish areas of conflict and duplications.

The reality is that government can no longer fund many MDAs and if it does not act fast enough, its salary and wage bills will become dangerously unachievable. Government has come to the ultimate realisation that there is no better time than now to keep only self-funding MDAs so as to free funds for much-needed capital projects across the country.

It is clear that government is intent on implementing the recommendations of these committees not because it necessarily desires to exercise the willpower but because the chicken has come to roost. Government is broke. The Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Mrs. Zainab Ahmed, during a recent 'National Policy Dialogue on Corruption and Cost of Governance in Nigeria' in Abuja, stressed government's intention to prune down MDAs in order to reduce the cost of governance even as revenue dips.

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realisation that there is no better time than now to keep only self-funding MDAs so as to free funds for much-needed capital projects across the country.

## Recognition/Ranking Indices



MDAs have several issues that weaken their capacity to deliver on their statutory mandate. Many MDAs certainly need to be reworked, merged or scrapped. Government will set this process in motion when it finally begins to implement recommendations of the committees set up to address this. This Special Joint Report on MDAs and Ranking was based on the following:

1. Digital Presence: Indices of digital transformation – depth and frequency of digital/ online interactions via web or mobile to advance the mandate of your MDA.
2. Number/depth of projects, initiatives,

research efforts identifiable with the development goals under President Buhari within your MDA.

3. Despite challenges, how MDA's KPIs/ milestones have measured up to their Mission, Mandate, Vision, & Goals (MMVG)

4. Impact of all these projects, initiatives, research efforts on people and environment

Many of the MDAs' websites are uninformative, lacking basic data on their activities and merely serve as poor notice boards for out-of-date press statements. In addition, they have poor navigation and

queries do not get responses.

Only few MDAs have effective websites that strengthen "institutional credibility and brand, improve user satisfaction, and save time and money in terms of speed, download and navigation.

The websites of NCC

(<https://www.ncc.gov.ng/>); the newly reworked NADDC (<https://naddc.gov.ng/>);

NIMC (<https://nimc.gov.ng/>); NDPB

(<https://ndpb.gov.ng/>); NITDA

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Many MDAs are not so forthcoming on projects, initiatives, research efforts that could be identifiable with their development goals under President Buhari. Many complain of lack of fund to execute their projects and do more than pay staff salaries; or simply put have become agency for 'salaries collection'. The results are that many of the MDAs have little or no impact and merely exist as government agencies.

## MDAs to be merged or abolished

In an 800-page report, the Oronsaye Committee recommended that government should reduce 263 of the MDAs to 161; completely abolished 38 agencies; merge 52 agencies; and revert 14 to become departments in ministries. The White Paper from that committee and the subsequent sub-committees recommended the following.

### FRC, Salaries and Wages Income Commission

Abolition of the Fiscal Responsibility Commission (FRC; and the Salaries and Wages Income Commission as their functions are being performed by the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission.

### NAMA, NCAA and NIMET

Three agencies under the Aviation Ministry: Nigerian Airspace Management



Agency (NAMA), Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) and the Nigerian Metrological Agency (NIMET) were recommended to be merged into a new body to be known as the Federal Civil Aviation Authority (FCAA).

The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) be privatised without further delay.

### EFCC, ICPC and CCB

The Code of Conduct Tribunal be renamed 'Anti-Corruption Tribunal' and upgraded to the status of a Court of Superior Records with the responsibility for handling only

corruption cases once it is merged with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Crimes Commission (ICPC) and the Code of Conduct Bureau. (Government rejected this recommendation)

### NIPC, NEPC

The Nigerian Investment Promotion Council (NIPC) should be merged with the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) to drive better efficiency and utilization of resources.

### SMEDAN, NDE

NDE and SMEDAN to be merged and NAPEP scrapped - NAPEP no longer exist.

### Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution

Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution be scrapped; its functions to be transferred to the Department of Strategic Studies in the Nigerian Institute for International



Affairs (NIIA).

**PPPRA, PEF**

The Petroleum Products Pricing Regulatory Authority (PPPRA) and Petroleum Equalisation Fund be merged with Petroleum Equalisation Fund (PEF). The new NNPC has put some of these recommendations into effect.

**UCC**

The Utilities Charges Commission (UCC) be scrapped.

**National Commission for Nomadic Education**

The National Commission for Nomadic Education be scrapped and its functions taken over by the Universal Basic Education Commission.

**NOSDRA, NESREA**

National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) and National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) should cease to exist as agencies but become departments under the Ministry of Environment.

**NASENI, NCAM, FIIRO**

National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI); Federal Institute for Industrial Research Oshodi (FIIRO); and Projects Development Institute (PRODA) to be merged.

**NCAC, National Troupe, National Theatre**

The National Council of Arts and Culture (NCAC), National Troupe, and the National Theatre be merged into one agency

**National Commission for Museums and Monuments, National Gallery of Art**

The National Commission for Museums and Monuments; and the National Gallery of Art be merged as one agency.

**ICRC, BPE**

The Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) be merged into the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE).

**PCC**

The Public Complaints Commission (PCC) be abolished (Government rejected this recommendation).

**BCDA**

The Border Communities Development Agency (BCDA) be abolished and its

functions transferred to the National Boundary Commission. (Government rejected this recommendation).

**NEMA, National Refugees Commission**

The National Emergency Management (NEMA) be merged with the National Refugees Commission (Government rejected this recommendation).

**Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC)**

The Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) should revert to the Highways Department of the Federal Ministry of Works. FRSC staff be redeployed to Police Service Commission, the Federal Civil Service Commission and the Vehicle Inspection Office (VIO).

**Pilgrims Commissions**

The National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON) and Nigerian Christian Pilgrims Commission (NCPC) be scrapped.

**PSIN, ASCON**

The Public Service Institute of Nigeria (PSIN) be merged with the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) - Government rejected this recommendation.

**NCC, NBC**

The Nigerian Communications Commission, Nigerian Broadcasting Commission and the regulatory functions of the Nigerian Postal Services be merged under a new entity: Communications Regulatory Authority of Nigerian (CRAN) - Government rejected the recommendation.

**NITDA**

The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) revert to become a department under its supervisor ministry (Government rejected this recommendation).

**NIGCOMSAT**

Government shares in the Nigerian Communications Satellite (NIGCOMSAT) Limited be sold to private investors with government owning only minority shares.

**NECO & NABTEB**

NECO and NABTEB to be scrapped and their functions reverted to the West African Examinations Council (Government rejected the recommendation).

**NBTE, NCCE**

The National Board for Technical Education and National

**NMDC, National Metallurgical Training Institute**

National Metallurgical Development Center (NMDC), Jos and the National Metallurgical Training Institute, Onitsha be scrapped. Government rejected the recommendation.

**NAPTIN, NREA**

The National Power Training Institute of Nigeria (NAPTIN) and National Rural Electrification Agency (NREA) be scrapped. The government rejected this recommendation.

**RMRDC, NABDA**

The Raw Materials Research and Development Council (RMRDC), National Biotechnology Development Agency (NABDA), and Nigerian Natural Medicine Development Agency (NNMDA) be scrapped (Government rejected these recommendations). Technology (NARICT) be merged (Government rejected these recommendations).

**ECN**

The Energy Commission of Nigeria (ECN) be scrapped (Government rejected these recommendations).

**ITF**

The Industrial Training Fund (ITF) and Nigerian Financial Reporting Council (NFRC) be self-funding (Government rejected these recommendations).

**Government agrees to discontinue funding professional bodies**

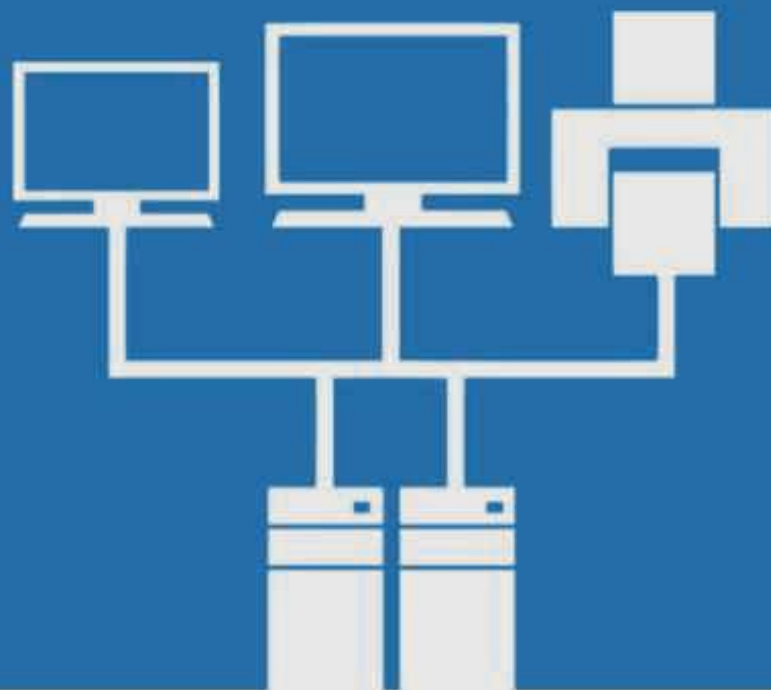
**including:** Computer Professionals Council of Nigeria (CPRCN); Nigerian Builders Council (NBC); Council for Registered Engineers of Nigeria (COREN); Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN); Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON); Nigeria Press Council; Architects Registration Council; Estate Surveyors' Registration Board (ESRB); Town Planners Council (TPC); Nigerian Builders Council (NBC); Quantity Surveyors' Registration Board of Nigeria (QSRB); and Council of Nigerian Mining Engineers and Geoscientists (COMEG).

**Government rejects to discontinue funding of the Council of Legal Education and Nigerian Law School (CLE &NLS)**

**METHODOLOGY**

This report is based on direct interviews, assessment of content on websites and media reports.

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**The Special Joint Report offers an Objective Recognition/Ranking of Top MDAs based on the following:**

1. Digital Presence: Indices of digital transformation – depth and frequency of digital/ online interactions via web or mobile to advance the mandate of your MDA.



2. Number/depth of projects, initiatives, research efforts identifiable with the development goals under President Buhari within your MDA.

3. Despite challenges, how MDA's KPIs/ milestones have measured up to their Mission, Mandate, Vision, & Goals (MMVG)

4. Impact of all these projects, initiatives, research efforts on people and environment

**The MDAs List / CATEGORY A**



**EXCELLENT**  
Bureau of Public Enterprises

bpe.gov.ng



**EXCELLENT**  
Nigerian Communications Commission

ncc.gov.ng



**EXCELLENT**  
Galaxy Backbone

galaxybackbone.com.ng



**EXCELLENT**  
Nigerian Communications Commission

ncc.gov.ng



**EXCELLENT**  
Nigeria Communications Satellite Limited

nigcomsat.gov.ng



**EXCELLENT**  
National Information Technology Development Agency

nitda.gov.ng



**EXCELLENT**  
Universal Service Provision Fund

uspf.gov.ng



**EXCELLENT**  
Federal Inland Revenue Service

firs.gov.ng



**EXCELLENT**  
Nigerian Postal Service

firs.gov.ng



**EXCELLENT**  
National Identity Management Commission

nimc.gov.ng



**EXCELLENT**  
The Central Bank of Nigeria

cbn.gov.ng



**EXCELLENT**  
The Economic & Financial Crime Commission

efcc.gov.ng



**EXCELLENT**  
The Independent National Electoral Commission

inecnigeria.org

**The MDAs List / CATEGORY B**

The following MDAs scored a pass-mark in all the criteria list except in criteria 1. Their digital presence is low.



**PASSED**  
Nigerian Export Promotion Council

nepc.gov.ng



**PASSED**  
National Population Commission

nationalpopulation.gov.ng



**PASSED**  
Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation  
nnpcgroup.gov.ng



**PASSED**  
The Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative  
neiti.gov.ng



**PASSED**  
The Code of Conduct Bureau  
ccb.gov.ng



**PASSED**  
The Nigeria Office for Trade Negotiations  
notn.gov.ng



**PASSED**  
Raw Materials Research and Development Council  
rmrdc.gov.ng



**PASSED**  
The Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund  
nsitf.gov.ng



**PASSED**  
Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency  
smedan.gov.ng



**PASSED**  
The Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority  
nsia.gov.ng



**PASSED**  
Tertiary Education Trust Fund  
tETFund.gov.ng



**PASSED**  
The Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission  
nipc.gov.ng



**PASSED**  
The Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission  
fccpc.gov.ng



**PASSED**  
The Nigerian Meteorological Agency  
nimet.gov.ng



**PASSED**  
The National Automotive Design and Development Council  
naddc.gov.ng



**PASSED**  
The Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council  
pebec.gov.ng



**PASSED**  
Industrial Training Fund  
itf.gov.ng



**PASSED**  
Nigerian Copyright Commission  
copyright.gov.ng



**PASSED**  
National Drug Law Enforcement Agency  
ndlea.gov.ng



**PASSED**  
National Youth Service Corps  
nysc.gov.ng

## The MDAs List / CATEGORY C

The following MDAs scored a pass-mark in all the criteria list except in criteria 1 & 4. Their digital presence and impact of projects, initiatives and research efforts are quite low.

1			<b>WEAK</b> National Space Research and Development Agency nasrda.gov.ng	11			<b>WEAK</b> Rural Electrification Agency rea.gov.ng
2			<b>WEAK</b> National Orientation Agency noa.gov.ng	12			<b>WEAK</b> The Federal Civil Service Commission fedcivilservice.gov.ng
3			<b>WEAK</b> Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority irdp-online.gov.ng	13			<b>WEAK</b> The Federal Road Safety Corps frsc.gov.ng
4			<b>WEAK</b> Universal Basic Education Commission ubec.gov.ng	14			<b>WEAK</b> The Infrastructure Concession Regulation Commission icrc.gov.ng
5			<b>WEAK</b> National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency nesrea.gov.ng	15			<b>WEAK</b> The Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation tournigeria.gov.ng
6			<b>WEAK</b> National Biotechnology Development Agency nabda.gov.ng	16			<b>WEAK</b> The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission nerc.gov.ng
7			<b>WEAK</b> Energy Commission of Nigeria energy.gov.ng	17			<b>WEAK</b> National Centre For Women Development ncwd.gov.ng
8			<b>WEAK</b> Nigeria Atomic Energy Commission nigatom.gov.ng	18			<b>WEAK</b> Niger Delta Development Commission nddc.gov.ng
9			<b>WEAK</b> National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control nafdac.gov.ng	19			<b>WEAK</b> National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons naptip.gov.ng
10			<b>WEAK</b> National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure naseni.gov.ng	20			<b>WEAK</b> Legal Aid Council legalaidcouncil.gov.ng

# NCC: A national telecoms regulator with global reckoning



The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), foremost telecom regulatory agency in Africa, is the independent National Regulatory Authority for the telecommunications industry in Nigeria. It has the mandate to create an enabling environment for competition among operators in the industry as well as ensuring the provision of qualitative and efficient

telecommunications services throughout the country. The telecoms regulatory body enjoys positive global reputation and is often cited as a model regulatory institution. The NCC is at the forefront of promoting Nigeria's national broadband agenda through series of policy and projects interventions. By creating a dynamic regulatory environment through the years, it has supported a market

driven telecommunications industry and universal access to affordable, equitable services. As the National Telecommunications Regulator, its core values are fostered on three guiding principles: Fair, Firm and Forthright to carry out its duties/functions – all of which have helped it to gain confidence of stakeholders including operators and consumers.

## What would you consider your MDA's milestones/achievements in the last seven years under President Muhammadu Buhari in terms of Projects and initiatives?

The Nigerian Communications Commission has a history of strategic planning. Since the adoption of its first Strategic Management Plan (SMP) in 2002 as the main driver of its service delivery process to run for five years, the Commission has evolved other SMPs including those of 2003-2007, and 2014 – 2018. The current SMP to run to 2024 is tagged ASPIRE 2024 and reflects the five (5) strategic pillars of the SMP to guide

the Commission to consistently discharge its mandate, achieve its Vision and the delivery of its strategic results for which it has become well known for. ASPIRE stands for A: Advancement; S: Strategy; P: Professionalism; I: Innovation; R: Regulatory; and E: Excellence. According to the Executive Vice Chairman/CEO of the Nigerian Communications Commission, Prof.

Umar Garba Danbatta, "the Commission will continue to support the vision of the present government to put Nigeria amongst the top twenty in the comity of nations and to align our developmental goals in keeping with the seventeen United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but particularly the goal to eradicate extreme poverty.



L-R: Prof. Isa Ali Ibrahim (Pantami), Honourable Minister, Federal Ministry Communications and Digital Economy (FMCoDE) and Prof. Adeolu Akande, Chairman, Board of Commissioners, Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC)



Prof. Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami, Honourable Minister of Communications and Digital Economy (4th from left); Prof. Umar Garba Danbatta, Executive Vice Chairman/CEO, Nigerian Communications Commission, NCC (3rd from right) with other Dignitaries from Left to Right: Salahu Junaidu, Director, Chief Research Adviser to the Honourable Minister; Prof. Muhammed Bello Abubakar, MD/CEO Galaxy Backbone; Prof. Mike Hinchey, Keynote Speaker; Engr. Ubale Maska, Executive Commissioner, Technical Services, NCC (2nd right); Mr. Aliyu Yusuf Aboki, Executive Secretary, West Africa Telecom Regulatory Assembly (1st Right), during the Stakeholders Consultative Forum on Emerging Tech/Launching of two books by Pantami in Lagos.

The following initiatives at the NCC directly or indirectly target poverty eradication:

A. Advanced Digital Appreciation Programme: Advanced Digital Appreciation Programme for Tertiary Institutions (ADAPTI) is aimed at bridging the digital divide existing in academia with the provision of computers and other ICT facilities to

equip the lecturers and other experts in order to improve ICT skills and also to enrich the students. The overriding objective of this intervention has been to elicit the pervasive application of ICT skills in academia for enhanced staff output, institutional efficiency, and student enculturation to e-based learning for sustainable national growth.

B. Digital Awareness Programme

(DAP): this is a special intervention programme to address the digital information knowledge gap in the country, especially among the teeming youthful population. On the last count, the DAP Project supports 229 Secondary Schools across the Six (6) Geopolitical Zones of Nigeria, including the Federal Capital Territory. The strategy in this programme is to expose schools and colleges to ICT awareness, usage and application by facilitating access to ICT tools by the provision of twenty one (24) Desktop Computers, Local Area Network, Printers, Scanners, VSAT Dish and deployment of one Year Bandwidth Subscription for Internet Access.

C. NCC- Digital Bridge Institute (DBI) Projects: Nigeria's ICT flagship institution, the Digital Bridge, DBI, came into existence in 2004 to impact on the national ICT human capital building efforts by bridging the ICT knowledge gap.

D. Frequency Auction; Contributing to National Purse: The Nigerian telecom regulator has contributed to the Federation Account from proceeds of frequency auctions and licensing. The frequencies auctioned, are in turn used for the deployment of services for poverty reduction and the benefit of the citizenry. The Commission has a clear understanding of this value chain and is determined to uphold it.

E. Value Added Services (VAS): Telecommunication has given birth to several value-added services that open up benefits to all cadres of people irrespective of location and level of education. These VAS are great channels for revenue generation. Some VAT are content development, Phone repair network, IT device accessories sales market (phone pouches, screen covers etc), Ringback tones, and even government agencies providing service on telecom platform e.g NAFDAC – drug authentication code.

Broadband and Poverty: The Nigerian National Broadband Plan 2020–2025 (the "Broadband Plan") devotes an entire section to targets, strategies and roadmaps to promote pervasive broadband deployment, increased broadband adoption, usage and availability to all at affordable prices. These all point to government's



Consumers' Outreach in South-South Zone

commitment to harmonizing and utilizing the benefits derivable from ICT for the good of all. In 2020, the latest National Broadband Plan was approved

to foster fuller economic exploitation of ICTs. This means that there will be more pervasive deployment and usage of ICT to push the development and economic attractiveness of the nation.

Other milestones include:

- **Maintaining steady overall contribution of telecoms to Nigeria's GDP in excess of N10 trillion quarterly**
- **Facilitating broadband infrastructure expansion through approvals of licensing of Infrastructure Companies (INFRACOS) in various geo-political zones**
- **Strengthening the industry Corporate Governance Standards through the Board's commitment and active participation at sensitisation workshops for stakeholders in different geo-political zones**
- **NCC holds series of active consumer-focused programmes and awareness initiatives - declared 2017 the 'Year of the Telecom Consumer' to drive issues of consumers' protection**
- **Improved employee work culture/ Strengthened organizational culture to ensure regulatory excellence – NCC has some of best motivated workforce through a robust Employee Motivation Plan**

### Your major challenges to your Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) reflecting your MDA's Mission, Mandate, Vision, & Goals (MMVG)



The SMP highlights the desired outcomes/strategic results, specifies strategic objectives and the initiatives as

well as actions of the NCC within a specific period. All of these are designed to address the inherent challenges as

well as prepare every to push ahead to the Commission's goals. The SMP ending in 2024 also clearly states the key performance indicators to measure effectiveness and performance of the NCC as an organisation. The SMP is well captured in the NCC's Strategic Vision Plan 2021- 2025 (SVP) and is of course, targeting to improve competencies and steadily enhance the percentage contribution of telecoms to GDP from 8.5% to in 2015 50 14.3 by Q1, 2020 and above 17% by 2022. Below is a capsule of the SVP:

- Facilitate the provision of infrastructure for a digital economy which fosters national development
- Promote deployment of infrastructure to facilitate broadband penetration, affordable communications services that support the digital economy.
- Promote continuous broadband



penetration and sustained optimisation of spectrum; Advocate measures that promote and ensure availability, accessibility & affordability of telecommunication services and facilitate improvements in digital literacy level.

- Improve Quality of Service (QoS) for enhanced Consumer Quality of Experience (QoE)
- Ensure that services provided by telecom operators are of a quality that meets the consumers' expectations and enhances overall quality of experience.
- Enhance consumer satisfaction and protection; Strengthen QoS regulations and facilitate active infrastructure sharing among

telecom operators.

- Promote fair competition, inclusive growth, increased investment and innovative services
- Ensure a competitive market for communications services that foster fair inclusion of all players, promotes local content and Innovative services in ways that facilitate new investment, job creation and consumer satisfaction.
- Encourage fair competition through appropriate regulations, ensure compliance with telecommunication industry 'sub-code' of corporate governance; Promote indigenous ICT innovation, foster the development, use and adoption of new & emerging technologies and eliminate barriers

in telecommunication service provision & advancements.

- Develop deployment standards for new technologies such as 5G, HAPS, Satellite, TV White Space
- Determine required capital structure for various licenseable undertakings
- Deploy new tools to measure QoE (crowd sourcing and others)
- Implement National Roaming/Develop Guidelines for fibre deployment
- Review activities of Digital Service Providers
- Ensure the availability of reliable interoperable telecoms infrastructure
- Full Implementation of Accounting Separation

### How digitally enabled is your MDA in terms of infrastructure and staff skill?

NCC provides strong organisational and training support to its staff. It is traditionally a staff-focused organisation. The current SVP reflects this foundation to further create a more efficient regulatory body. The benchmarks for the SVP include:

- Organisational renewal for operational efficiency and Regulatory excellence
- Re-engineer the culture of the

Commission in a way that emphasises professional conduct and operational efficiency to attain regulatory excellence.

- Strengthen organizational culture for improved regulatory excellence and enhance internal processes by digital transformation.
- Develop a competency and Mentoring Framework

- Build a fit-for-purpose Time Management Scorecard to track meetings, engagements and deliverables
- Upskilling Senior and Executive Management
- End-to-End automation of full cycle staff appraisals, performance review, leave management and HR records

### The Buhari administration deemed itself best in terms of transparency and openness. How much of these exist here?

Over the years, the NCC has built a formidable reputation locally and internationally for its openness, fairness

and transparency as a regulator — A higher standard of integrity and openness was employed in the recent 5G

auction as the process was, for the first time, witnessed by the public both physically and virtually.



#### Prof. Umar Garba Danbatta: Nigeria's Telecoms Regulator & Chief Umpire

Prof. Umar Garba Danbatta is the Executive Vice Chairman/CEO of the Nigerian Communications Commission. He is currently serving a second term of five years in office, following the approval of President Muhammadu Buhari in 2020. Danbatta earned BEng, MSc degrees from the Technical University of Wroclaw in Poland and received his PhD from the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology. The multiple award-winning professor successfully spearheaded the attainment and surpassing of Nigeria's national broadband target in 2018, and he is currently among those leading the charge for the realisation of the new national broadband target of 70% by 2025, after the country achieved and surpassed its earlier national target of 30% penetration in 2018. Through effective regulatory regime and various cutting-edge initiatives, Danbatta has strengthened the role of telecommunications sector as a major contributor to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, and boosted telecoms investment inflows from \$36 billion to over \$70 billion since 2015, among others.

# Galaxy Backbone (GBB) and the digital empowerment of MDAs



HM, Prof Pantami © and MD, GBB, Prof Abubakar (r)

Digitisation of MDAs is steadily taking place through the adoption of e-government powered by Galaxy Backbone in a way that enhances the effectiveness of many MDAs. GBB runs managed infrastructure including data centres and connectivity backbones across Nigeria to live up to mandate as a 'provider of shared ICT infrastructure, applications and services to all federal government MDAs and institutions across the country.' Its data centre holding includes its Tier III Datacentre and Network Operations Centre located inside its National Shared

Services Centre (NSSC) in Abuja and a new Tier IV data centre resource for launch in Kano as it begins its nationwide deployment of data centres. In the last three years, it has fortified its capacity to provide ICT support services for MDAs including facilitating government's ability to hold via virtual means the mandatory Federal Executive Council meetings and National Council of States meetings. The GBB currently supports over 40,000 email boxes, hosting services for hundreds of sensitive governments sites thousands of IP and video telephony

devices to MDAs across the country. It has in the last four, installed fibre optic cables across over 17 states and is drawing closer to connecting all of 36 states of the country via fibre through the National Information Communication Technology Infrastructure Backbone, (NICTIB) project now at its second phase. GBB has been able to run successfully with President Muhammadu Buhari's vision of a digital economy as pursuit vigorously by his Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Professor Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami.

## What would you consider your MDA's milestones/achievements in the last seven years under President Muhammadu Buhari in terms of Projects and initiatives?

In the last seven years, we have had an interesting and rewarding journey as an organization working under the current government of President Muhammadu Buhari. The milestones and achievements we have recorded could

not have been possible if we did not have the support coming from our supervising Ministry led by the Honourable Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Prof. Isa Ali Ibrahim (Pantami) and by extension the President. During this

period, we have grown in terms of the length and breadth of our Infrastructure and in terms of our people. As you might know Galaxy Backbone(GBB) is a Service Provider focused on providing the platform



*The Federal Government has saved Billions From Video Conferencing powered by GBB.*

or what you might call Infrastructure that powers digital services for the development and security of both the public and private sector. Through this infrastructure, we have expanded and deepened broadband penetration across the country. We have grown from over 1100 km of fibre to over 2500 kilometers of fibre laid across the country. In the same light, we have a coverage of our own fibre cables in about 17 states of the federation. We have laid this fibre cable in areas where our counterparts in the private sector may not have found viable, but we have gone through those parts to ensure all of the nation is connected via Optic fibre cables that would enhance internet experience and the standard of living of the people. With this, more and more Federal Secretariats across the country and higher institutions are covered.

Also, we have built a Tier III and Tier IV Datacentre that provide Cloud, Datacentre, Disaster Recovery and business continuity services in secure environments. Our goal is to encourage organisations to host and collocate their data or applications in country on a platform that they can trust and is secure and accessible whenever they need them.

Now due to the nature of our business and our drive to maintain international standards in terms of our operations, we have recertified ourselves with the International Standards Organisation(ISO) with the Information Security Management Systems(ISMS) and Service Management Systems(SMS) certifications. This aids our level of credibility and enhances the confidence Clients have with us.

In the same vain, we have also certified as a Payment, Card Industry Data security Standard (PCIDSS) organization. This qualifies us to provide services to organisations in the payment card an financial services industry. We met all the standards and principles set

aside for providing this service.

In addition, we have provided a Unified Communications platform with the capacity to provide secure Virtual meetings using high-definition video and voice equipment and properly managed by a dedicated team of Network Communications Experts. It was this platform that was used by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) during the COVID-19 pandemic when there was a lockdown and it continues to be used by FEC, Council of States and a good number of Ministries, Departments and Agencies for their meetings.

In terms of people, we have trained over 2000 public servants on ICT and digital skills that support the work they do for their respective MDAs. We have raised the bar with our Capacity building services driven by one of the new departments we set up; Research Digital Innovation and Skills (RDIS). Through this department we have intensified our Research initiatives and commitment towards building and developing people who will lead digital transformation across government establishments.

### **How digitally enabled is your MDA in terms of infrastructure and capacity/digital skill of staff?**

This is a great question because as an organization that prides itself as the digital Infrastructure and shared services provider to public and private sector organisations, it would be good to know if we have the right capacity in terms of the evolving skills needed to support the 'new' types of organisations coming out of these times. And the simple answer to your question is yes. What we have tried to do in the last few years, is build not just the technical skills of our people which is very important, but

also build their human and leadership skills in such a way that it meets up to current digital experience that our customers and stakeholders are experiencing in their respective worlds. Today we have intra team virtual meetings within the organisations that gives everyone the opportunity to get the business done quickly and more effectively. Our processes have improved due to the different digital platforms we are adopting in delivering services and a lot more changes are on the way to ensure we are

We now have a Cloud platform that will further enhance our digital services deliverables and provide a better

experience for our clients. This Cloud platform will enable our Clients and prospective clients to commence and

complete their transactions online in one friendly platform.

**What would you consider the major challenges to your Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) reflecting your MDA's Mission, Mandate, Vision, & Goals (MMVG)?**

Two years ago, we reorganized our internal structure to reflect our new realities, meet up with the directives given to us by the government and ensure we improve service delivery. We also wanted to ensure that we aligned with the National Digital Economy Policy Strategy designed by the Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy working together with some stakeholders from the industry and ofcourse led by the Honourable Minister, Prof. Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami. This document is to drive the digital

transformation journey of the whole country.

To meet up with the responsibilities all of these, we set Key Performances Indictors that help us stay focused and on track. While we continue to see progress and growth along the lines of our goals, it has not been a smooth ride. We have encountered challenges from human capacity, bureaucracy, high cost of Infrastructure and the paucity of funds available. However, in all of these, we have

chosen to view them as opportunities that we can tap into to become better at who we are and what we do.

They have also made us more innovative in nature. We have continued to look for new and improved ways of advancing with our goals by establishing new partnerships and collaborations with local and international organisations that can leverage our infrastructures and work with us towards enhancing Nigeria's digital Economy.

**The Buhari administration deemed itself best in terms of transparency and openness. How much of these exist here for outsiders to readily access information about your MDA?**

At Galaxy Backbone, we strive to live by these ideals you have mentioned in our engagement with one another and in our engagement with Clients and stakeholders. Our commitment to providing digital services that is accessible at times guides us in our interaction with our Clients. We consistently communicate our milestones

and achievements and provide the space for the public to come in, take tour of our infrastructure in unrestricted areas, ask questions and engage with us. In that way people see clearly what we provide to them and the nature of the service.

Our commitment to openness and

transparency is contributing to the growing trust in our services. Our Clients and stakeholders have the opportunity of accessing information, or servers they are hosting with us. This is line with the guidelines set by the leadership of the current administration.



**Prof Muhammad Bello Abubakar: The Game Changer at Galaxy Backbone**

Since assuming office as Managing Director/CEO, Galaxy Backbone Ltd (GBB), Professor Muhammad Bello Abubakar has rejigged the enterprise to fulfill its mandate as IT backbone of ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) and provider of shared infrastructure services. Abubakar has positioned GBB to help drive government's vision for a digital economy. An outstanding academic, Abubakar is a professor of Petroleum Geosciences who has helped to close the gaps between the gown and town. He has launched comprehensive plans and actions to actualize performance targets; enhance operational efficiency; build staff capacity; and re-engineer GBB to better meet its service goals. Abubakar obtained B. Tech in Applied Geology and M.Sc. and Ph.D. in Sedimentology/Petroleum

# NITDA: The Mandate for IT Regulation and Development



The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) is a

public service institution established by NITDA Act 2007 as the ICT policy

implementing arm of the Federal Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It has sole responsibility of developing programs that caters for the running of ICT related activities in the country. NITDA is also mandated with the implementation of policies guideline for driving ICT in Nigeria. It plays advisory role in copyright law by verification and revision of applicable laws in tandem with the application of software and technology acquisition. Majority of these activities are achieved through organization of workshops which cater for training needs of her staff, government functionaries and education sectors.

## Milestones

### 1. What would you consider your MDA's milestones/achievements in the last seven years under President Muhammadu Buhari in terms of Projects and initiatives?

In the last few years under President Muhammadu Buhari GCFR, the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) has achieved a lot of milestones with the support of the Honourable Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Prof. Isa Ali Ibrahim (Pantami) who has remained committed to pursuing the vision of the President for the country's digital economy as clearly established in the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (NDEPS) of the Federal Government, and NITDA's Strategic Roadmap and Action Plan (SRAP 2021-2024). NITDA's achievements cut across sectors and all the geo-political zones. Below are some highlights:

#### DEVELOPMENTAL REGULATION

- Issued 7 Standards

- Issued 35 guidelines
- Establishment of Data Protection Regulation Bureau
- Issuance of Code of Practice for Digital Platforms
- Facilitated the Issuance of 3 FEC Memos
- Issued 6 Frameworks

#### IT PROJECT CLEARANCE

- Federal Public Institutions Cleared: (FPIs) 267
- Projects Worth Cleared: 1,404,780,916,844
- Amount Saved: N45,676,344,358

#### DIGITAL ECONOMY INTERVENTIONS

- Established 320 Digital Economy Centres
- Established 12 It Hubs & Incubation

- Centres
- Established 11 It Community & Digital Skill Acquisition

#### INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Trained 865 Children Under the SB4K Programme
- Trained 144 Developers Under the 1 Million Developer Programme
- Incubated 32 Startup under the IHATCH Programme

#### DIGITAL LITERACY AND SKILLS

- Grant 461 scholarships in IT related courses (42 PhD & 419 Msc)
- Trained 300 Women in Digital Skill
- Trained 280 Children in Robotics and Artificial Intelligence
- Trained 500 Refugees/Immigrants in



- digital skills
- Trained 5496 in NDPR
- Trained 6,644 Participants in the Digital States Initiatives
- Trained 1,650 students across higher institutions in CISCO IT Essentials
- TIES Scheme :- 6 hubs, 24 interns

**MAJOR FOCUS**

- Developmental Regulation
- Digital Literacy & Skills
- Digital Innovation & Entrepreneurship
- Digital Transformation
- Emerging Technologies
- Cybersecurity
- Promotion of Indigenous Content

Other significant achievements include:

- As a result of NITDA's efforts and other agencies under the Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy under the leadership of Prof Pantami, the ICT sector is contributing about 17.83% to Nigeria's GDP.
- The NITDA is currently exploring the use and adoption of Blockchain Technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data exploration framework and strategy for adoption into the digital economy vision of President Muhammadu Buhari.
- Establishment of National Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics
- Development of e-Agriculture web Portals
- Set up the National Public
- Key Infrastructure (PKI)
- Successful representation of Nigeria at Gulf Information Technology Exhibitions (GITEX) since 2013
- Established collaboration with Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) to secure funding in special areas of NGEA/Ne-GIF implementation
- Created a Portal to support the Nigeria ICT Innovation Entrepreneurship Vision (NIIEV) for the Tech Ecosystem, which consists of a database for hubs, start-ups & other stakeholders
- Establishment and promotion of the National Adopted Village for Smart Agriculture (NAVSA), a digital platform designed to practically enable and accelerate the achievement of Government (Federal, State and local) policy drives in agriculture. NITDA targets 10 million farmers with NAVSA smart farming.
- Development of interactive platform for MDAs, consumer and IT service providers to enhance quality of service delivery in government institutions
- NITDA has recertified itself with the International Standards Organisation (ISO) with the Information Security Management Systems (ISMS) and Service Management Systems (SMS) certifications to aid its level of credibility and enhances the confidence clients have in the agency.

**How digitally enabled is your MDA in terms of infrastructure and capacity/digital skill of staff?**

NITDA provides the policy and infrastructural frameworks as an IT regulatory and development agency. It has invested heavily in human and

digital Infrastructure capacity to be able to deliver on its mandate. NITDA has continued to improve the technical skills of its staff

through upskilling and continuous training enabling them to provide leadership across board. NITDA through the digital transformation technical working groups (DT-TWGs) leads the implementation of the e-Government

Master Plan and the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy through the Strategic Roadmap and Action Plan (SRAP 2021-2024) to drive the eGovernment Service-Wide Capacity Building Programme nationwide. This

programme is aimed at equipping public servants in the federal public institutions (FPIs) with the necessary skills needed for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and the future of work.

**What would you consider the major challenges to your Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) reflecting your MDA's Mission, Mandate, Vision, & Goals (MMVG)?**

NITDA's internal structure is anchored to help it achieve its mandate and vision for optimum service delivery based on the NDEPS of the Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy, NITDA's own

SRAP. NITDA operates with clearly established Key Performances Indicators with each functionary assigned specific roles /responsibilities to drive these KPIs. The agency has continuously focused

on building capacity as a regulatory and development agency to equip its personnel to the dynamics of the industry and its increasing challenges. NITDA's assets are its people.

**2. The Buhari administration deemed itself best in terms of transparency and openness. How much of these exist here for outsiders to readily access information about your MDA?**

NITDA is one of the most opened and transparent MDAs. Through constant engagement with the stakeholders-public, NITDA has remained committed to open communication and shared value in information

dispensation. In line with the policy of President Muhammadu Buhari and the Honourable Minister for Communications, Prof Pantami, NITDA has an open door and transparency policy allowing the public access to

information whenever required. Whether through direct engagement or digital tools including emails, phone calls or social media interaction, NITDA is always quick to respond to enquiries.



**Inuwa Kashifu Abdullahi: Nigeria's Chief Information Officer**

Abdullahi is the Director General/CEO of the NITDA. A Massachusetts Institute of Technology – MIT Sloan – trained strategist with nearly two decades of experience in IT operations, business transformation and management. Abdullahi is a skilled technocrat and transformational leader with key competencies that cut across growth management, policy formulation, solutions architecture, resource mobilization and strategy implementation. He has amassed extensive corporate experience in the global private/public IT space and is the first Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert (CCIE) in Nigeria's public sector. He currently holds a bachelor's degree in computer science from ATBU Bauchi and is a recipient of multiple executive certifications from top-notch universities, including Harvard University, London Business School, Judge Business School, University of Cambridge, Oxford University, IMD Business School and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His professional certifications include but are not limited to

# NDPB and a national culture of compliance regulations



The Nigeria Data Protection Bureau (NDPB) is the country's privacy ombudsman's entrusted with providing guidance on data protection issues. While Nigeria awaits a principal

legislation on data protection, the data privacy watchdog relies on the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation 2019 ("NDPR"), which is a subsidiary legislation issued pursuant to the

National Information Technology Development Agency Act 2007 as principal data protection regulation in Nigeria. The Bureau has taken over all functions relating to data protection and regulation from the NITDA and is focusing on fostering a national culture of compliance regulations to help ensure that user's privacy requests are carried out by companies, and companies are responsible to take measures to protect private user data. The NDPB is increasingly undertaking an extensive national sensitization campaigns on data privacy and the provisions of the NDPR as well as the imperatives of respecting data privacy. The NDPB is also gradually moving towards enforcement of compliance with the provisions of the Nigeria Data Protection Regulations 2019 (NDPR).

## What would you consider your MDA's milestones/achievements in the last seven years under President Muhammadu Buhari in terms of projects and initiatives?

We were formally established on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2022. However, we were able to accomplish a considerable level of traction over the past few months. Please find below our list of achievements:

- Official Launch of Nigeria Data Protection Bureau (NDPB) Logo, Website, and Core Values: With the approval and support of the Honourable Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, the Bureau officially launched its logo, website, and Core values on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 2022.

### Capacity Building for NDPB staff:

The Bureau in partnership with key organisations conducted the following key capacity-building trainings for NDPB Staff:

- Huawei Training on Government Cloud Implementation and Data Protection Implementation Regulation.
- Infoprive Training on Data Protection and Data Privacy
- Mastercard Training on Data



Protection and Cyber-Security. Soft Skills Training facilitated by Dr. Noel Akpata.

- Institute of Information Management Training in Records and Information Management.
- Media Campaign Training by SIDMACH
- Training on Public Service Regulatory Framework by Oluwole Edun
- Training on Data Protection and Cyber-Security by Meta
- Training on Privacy Information Management Systems by Digital Encode

### Capacity Building Training for key organizations:

- Data Protection and Privacy Training for staff of Nigeria Television Authority
- Data Protection and Privacy Training for staff of Federal Polytechnic Owerri (to be conducted)
- Data Protection and Privacy Training for staff of Voice of Nigeria (to be conducted).



- Data Protection and Privacy Training for Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation. (to be conducted).

**Visits to Key Data**

**Controllers in the country:** Since the creation of the Bureau, it has embarked on strategic engagements and consultations with stakeholders (professionals, civil society organizations, development partners, the international community, etc.) to raise awareness on Data Protection and Privacy in the country. The Bureau has visited over 35 data controllers thus far. Some of which are listed below:

- National Identity Management Commission (NIMC).
- Ecosystem Coordination and Strategic Unit (ECSU)(ID4D)
- Nigeria Postal Service
- National Insurance Commission (NAICOM)
- Embassy of Finland
- Corporate Affairs Commission
- Federal Competition & Consumer Protection Council
- National Pension Commission
- Federal Mortgage Bank
- Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)
- Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF)
- National Health Insurance Authority
- Office of the Accountant General
- Nigeria Police Force
- Nigeria Defence College
- Nigerian Television Authority
- Voice of Nigeria
- National Lottery Regulatory Commission
- Independent Corrupt &

- other Related Offences Commission
- National Orientation Agency
- Nigeria Defence College
- Nigeria Television Authority
- Nigerian Communications Satellite Limited (NIGComSat).
- Office of the Secretary to the State Government
- Central Bank of Nigeria.

**Registration of New Data Protection Compliance Organisations (DPCOs):**

The Bureau currently has 103 Licensed DPCOs offering auditing, training, and consulting on data protection and privacy services. In order to meet the growing needs of the ecosystem, we have gone ahead to begin the registration of new Data Protection Compliance Organisations (DPCOs) through the NDPB Portal- (app.ndpb.gov.ng). The Bureau has set a target of registering forty-seven Data Protection Compliance Organisations before the end of the year.

**Enforcement Activities:**

Sequel to the raid on Soko Loan that was conducted by the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC), National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and the NDPB in conjunction with the Nigeria Police Enforcement team on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March, 2022, FCCPC and NDPB identified the need to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to create a Joint-Task Force to continue to protect the best interests of Nigerian citizens. The Joint-Task Force with FCCPC was inaugurated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2022 and is currently working together to identify the best ways



*The National Commissioner is hosted by the Ambassador, Embassy of Finland.*



*The NC/CEO NDPB receives an award from the Commandant of National Defence College, Rear Admiral Murtala Momoni Bashir, in Abuja.*



*The NC, Dr. Vincent Olatunji led some staff of the NDPB to meet with the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Mr. Boss Mustapha in Abuja.*



*The NC meets with Director General, Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) , Alhaji Yakubu Ibn Mohammed.*

to curb the activities of lending companies in the country.

The Bureau has also issued out compliance notices to various organizations across sectors such as the telecommunication, finance, and health industries. We are also working with the Police investigation team to conduct

investigations against companies that have violated the provisions of the NDPR.

**Development of Nigeria Data Protection Act:**

The Nigeria Data Protection Bureau in collaboration with World Bank, European Investment Bank and French Development Agency, and other relevant partners are working closely together to develop and ensure the passage of the Nigeria Data Protection Act. We have conducted various policy dialogues and engagements with key stakeholders to review the Data Protection Bill.

**International Collaborations:**

The National Commissioner has attended several international events to speak about Data Protection and Privacy in Nigeria these events include: Data Protection Conference 2022 in Kenya, ID4Africa Annual General Meeting and Conference in Morocco. The Bureau is also engaging with key organizations such as European Union, African Union, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Network of Africa Data Protection Authorities, Meta, Google, Mastercard etc and is exploring means of partnerships to promote the data protection and privacy ecosystem in Nigeria.

**How digitally enabled is your MDA in terms of infrastructure and capacity/digital skill of staff?**

As stated earlier, the Bureau is a new organisation and was only established in the beginning of the year. We have received admirable support from our Ministry, the Ministry

of Communications and Digital Economy, National Information Technology Development Agency, National Identity Management Commission, and the Nigeria Communications Commission. Our staff being predominantly members that have been seconded from NITDA are quite competent in digital skills and literacy. The Bureau, however, recognizes the need to continue to evolve with the times and promote capacity building of staff through training and certification courses in line with some of its key mandates.

**What would you consider the major challenges to your Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) reflecting your MDAs mission?**

Limited Knowledge about Data Protection on the part of Data Controllers and Data Subject: Privacy and data protection are emerging concepts in Nigerian society. Most data subjects are unaware of their rights, and most data controllers and processors are uninformed of their obligation to secure and/or respect the personal information entrusted to them. Therefore, it is difficult to implement our mission when there is a lack of understanding. Resistance to Change: Most organizations find it very difficult to evolve and adapt to the changes. For instance, according to Article 4.1 (2) of the NDPR Implementation Framework, all data controllers that fit the conditions stated in the article are required to appoint Data Protection Officers (DPO) within 6 months of commencing business or within 6 months of the issuance of this Framework. Data Controllers are also expected to put in place various standards, tests and



The NC/CEO received in audience, Senior Program Officer, Consumer Protection and RegTech at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation alongside Cyril Okoroigwe, Chief Executive Officer of RegTech Africa



The NC/CEO in attendance as a guest speaker at the Data Protection Conference 2022 in Kenya.

policies to ensure that the data in their custody is being adequately protected. This may lead to resistance from organizations that have set up fixed systems.

Institutional Capacity in MDAs and Private Organisations (DPOs, Data Processing Team, etc): There are currently less than 5,000 Data Protection experts in Nigeria to service over one million Data Controllers/Processors. In addition, there are over 800 Federal Government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) whereas there are less than 50 Data Protection Officers in the Public Sector. There is a need to build the capacity of individuals in order for them to bridge the gap. Initial challenges of setting up a new organization (Funding, Staffing, Structure, etc): The Bureau like any other new organization, currently only has a limited number of employees to handle a large amount of work. Also, there are various financial constraints as the Bureau was established after the National Budget was passed. This hinders several of our activities and limits our powers to carry out full implementation of our key mandates.

**The Buhari Administration deemed itself best in terms of transparency and openness. How much of these exist here for outsiders to readily access information about your MDA?**

It should be noted that the Bureau's core values are: Accountability, Integrity, Fairness, and Transparency. In order to promote the digitization of government services, we encourage people to contact us using the official email addresses and phone numbers, but we nevertheless have an open-door policy that permits individuals to drop in and discuss issues and receive clarification. Furthermore, the Bureau has a fully functional website; [www.ndpb.gov.ng](http://www.ndpb.gov.ng) which provides our contact information and social media handles. Members of the public may follow NDPB on our social media platforms by clicking on the links below:

- <https://web.facebook.com/ndpbngr>
- <https://www.twitter.com/ndpbngr1>
- <https://www.instagram.com/ndpbnigeria>

**Impact of all these projects, initiatives, research efforts on people and environment.**

Data is a crucial component of successful digital transformation, it has frequently been highlighted that organizations that handle and process data efficiently dominate

their respective industries. Although data can be used for development, it can also equally be used for malicious purposes. Without the safeguards afforded by Data Protection, millions of Nigerians are vulnerable to the following abuses among others:

- Cyber frauds
- Financial Loss (Individuals, Corporate organizations, and the nation)
- Loss of work, educational and medical data among others.
- Cyberbullying
- Intrusion into private family/social life
- Criminal disruption of livelihoods
- Data manipulation

Consequently, raising awareness on data protection and privacy is crucial to any developing country. The more we transform into a data-driven society, the more the need to secure data arises. Our trainings, awareness programs, and social media campaigns, therefore, aim to sensitize members of the public about their rights under the NDPR

and to inform data controllers about their obligations, to protect them and potentially their livelihoods. Furthermore, the enforcement activities conducted by the Bureau in collaboration with other organizations to tackle digital lending companies and to apprehend defaulting data controllers automatically advance our overall mission to build a secure digital economy.

The administrative functions of the Bureau to encourage the engagement of DPCOs and the mandate imposed by the NDPR to ensure organizations appoint or employ DPOs amongst other things has created a vibrant data protection ecosystem. The implementation of the NDPR has generated over 8,000 jobs together with cumulative earnings that is in excess of Four Billion Naira (N4, 000,000,000) only, within two years. Furthermore, one of the key targets for the Bureau is to expand job/wealth creation within the ecosystem and create over 250,000 jobs by 2028. This will reduce the staggering unemployment rates in the country today.



**Vincent Olatunji: Nigeria's 'Data Security Officer (DSO)**

The National Commissioner/Chief Executive Officer of the NDPB is Dr Vincent Olatunji who has a doctorate degree in Geography and Planning from the University of Lagos and an Advanced Diploma in Computer Studies. He is a Certified Public Private Partnership Specialist (IP3 Specialist) and a PECB Certified Data Protection Officer. He has worked in the public sector for almost 30 years thereby acquiring practical proficiency and thorough understanding of government operations in Nigeria and other countries. He brings on board significant experience in team building, research activities, policy development and strategic planning on various development initiatives across the three tiers of government in Nigeria.

# NIGCOMSAT: Sustaining Nigeria's communication satellite aspirations

The Nigerian Communications Satellite Ltd (NIGCOMSAT) operates under the supervision of the Federal Ministry of Communications & Digital Economy. Its mandate includes managing, controlling, and operating Nigeria's communication satellite assets. Generally seen as Nigeria's reference in satellite technologies, the company launched Africa's first geosynchronous communication satellite.

The NigComSat-1 was launched on May 13th 2007, aboard a CGWIC Chinese Long March 3B carrier rocket, from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in China. But the initial NigComSat-1 was deorbited shortly after launch following certain strictures in space (its Solar Array Deployment Assembly, SADA, malfunctioned). It was thereafter

replaced with NigComSat-1R (R stands for replacement). The NIGCOMSAT underscores one of Nigeria's strategic technical partnerships with the Chinese government as its satellite design, manufacture and launch has been in cooperation with the CGWIC of China.

NIGCOMSAT satellite assets offer capacity to deliver the following:

**Broadcasting:** With more than 50 DTH platforms, broadcasters trust us to deliver a wide range of media content to their customers' homes – including standard TV, HDTV and the Ultra HD channels. Our platform provides free-to-air, free-to-view and pay-TV channels, as well as video-on-demand content.

**Broadband:** NIGCOMSAT1r provides ubiquitous high speed coverage over

areas that terrestrial network operators cannot reach. Even in the most remote parts of Nigeria or West Africa, NIGCOMSAT will always deliver affordable consistent, reliable, and fast broadband services.

**Transponder Leasing:** We offer transponder leasing services on our Ku-band, C-band and Ka-band platforms on NigComSat-1R. 28 transponders and 7 antennas guarantee stronger footprints and center beams over Africa, Europe and Asia and better look angles and shorter latency for intra-African communications traffic.

**Navigation:** Nigerian Satellite Augmentation System (NSAS) is a Satellite-Based Augmentation System (SBAS) meant to close the gap and meet the need of an augmentation system in the African continent. It is a Navigation Overlay Service (NOS)



similar to European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS).

**Value Added Services:** We provide indigenous, innovative and cutting-edge value added services leveraging our expertise to provide solutions to industry specific needs and enhance the value of our satellite communications services. We help provide services that enhance the professionalism and processes of the workplace.

#### Other milestones

- In 2015 NigComSat won the contract for the in-orbit test (IOT) and carrier spectrum monitoring (CSM) services for Belintersat-1 satellite for satellite operator Belintersat from the Republic of Belarus. With the Belintersat-1 satellite NigComSat was also able to provide more broadband services, enterprise solutions, secured communications, over Nigeria and other 35 African countries, including Ghana, Cameroon, Mali and others.

- In 2021 Agency for Air Navigation Safety in Africa and Madagascar (ASECNA), Nigerian Communications Satellite Ltd. (NIGCOMSAT) and Thales Alenia Space partner to push additional SBAS services across Africa.
- In 2018 NigComSat ordered two additional satellites from China valued at 550 million. The new satellites, to be known as NigComSat-2 and NigComSat-3, are to serve as backup to NigComSat-1R. NigComSat-2 and NigComSat-3 will be located 19° East and 22° West,



respectively for provision of C-Band, Ku-Band and Ka-Band payload capability for a minimum service life of 15 years. NigcomSat-2 is designed to cover Nigeria, Middle-East, China and other Asian countries. NigComSat-3 will cover Nigeria and the South and North America. With the three satellites in orbit, it will be possible for the Nigerian telecommunications industry to dominate the African market within a period of five years after the launch of the satellites.

- NIGCOMSAT in 2020 got approval to form two subsidiary companies (SUBCOs): the Satellite Infrastructure Company (SIC) to provide satellite upstream services such as Transponder Leasing,

and In-orbit-Testing (IOT) services, Carrier Spectrum Management (CSM) services, among others; and the Satellite Broadband and Broadcasting Company (SBBC) to provide satellite downstream services such as Broadband Internet Services, Broadcasting (DTH) services, among others

- NIGCOMSAT has unveiled its Key Performance Indicators (KPI) to transform it into an opportunity-driven entity allowing it to take higher risks in the fast-growing ICT sector.
- NIGCOMSAT is a key player in the Nigeria National Broadband Plan (NNBP 2020-2025) and is a key contributor of satellite communication solutions within the national ecosystem of digital economy service infrastructure.
- Launched of Nig-kanet services in 2015 for ease of internet penetration through Very Small Aperture Terminal (V-SAT). Corporate entities such as NIMC, NIPOST are on this platform.
- As part of VSAT/TVRO capacity development programme, NIGCOMSAT has trained 600 youths across the six geo-political zones in the country
- NIGCOMSAT has continue to promote awareness and adoption of satellite technology and has supported startup teams including Astromania, Floews, Future Generations, and Pyloops, to compete in the ActInSpace® international innovation contest of 100 cities across five continents.



#### Dr. Abimbola Alale: Managing national aspirations for a global satellite company

Dr Abimbola Alale is the Managing Director/CEO, Nigerian Communication Satellite Limited (NIGCOMSAT) and has pursued an active career in the Space Sector for over 20 years. She has been with NIGCOMSAT from birth and helped to build the company as envisioned by the Nigerian government despite some hiccups. Alale is a PhD degree holder of Security & Strategic Studies from Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria. She also holds a Master degree in Space Studies (MSc) and an MBA degree from the International Space University, Strasbourg-France. Other Certificates were obtained at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA and the Management School, London. Dr. Alale is a Fellow of African Scientific Institute (FASI), Certified Forensic Investigation Professional (CFIP), Member International Academy of Forensics (MIAF), Fellow of Chartered Public Diplomacy and Management (FCPDM). She was a Council Member 2021 of the World Economic Forum for Global Future Council on Space.

# Is Nigerian government taxing telecoms to death?

*Matters eRising with Olusegun Oruame*

Government is broke and desperately needs money to keep afloat. Is there any aspect of public sector (not directly expose to commercial activities) that is not broke?

In the face of dwindling national income and rising debts it is increasingly becoming difficult for government to meet its obligations including paying salaries. Bankruptcy hangs over government and governance and the statistics on the state of affairs are frighteningly depressing.

National income has shrunk considerably and its impact spread across our national life. The African Development Bank (AfDB) is not so optimistic about the country's economy and so too are many experts. In fact, the AfDB economic outlook says "growth will decelerate, averaging 3.2% during 2022–23, due to persistent low oil production and rising insecurity. Inflation is projected to remain elevated at 17% in 2022 and to stay above pre-pandemic levels in 2023, fueled mainly by rising food, diesel, and gas prices and persistent supply disruptions."

Even in the face of this pathetic state of affairs, government is still lustfully incurring very high overheads – a clear manifestation of absence of fiscal discipline and an indication that the economy has been managed more to consume and not to create.

## **Nigeria's sick economy needs oxygen**

The economy is literally on a sick bed and urgently needs oxygen to aid its recovery. To go by the AfDB's and World Bank picture, Nigeria's economy grew by 3.6% in 2021 from a 1.8% contraction in 2020, Annual average inflation stood at 17.0% in 2021 against 13.2%. On the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) side, it has not been an exciting ride, Nigeria's annual real GDP growth rate, which averaged 7% from 2000 to 2014, fell to 2.7% in 2015 and to -1.6% in 2016. Growth rebounded to 0.8% in 2017, 1.9% in 2018, and then plateaued at 2% percent in 2019 where it has flattened out since then to reflect the negative impact of COVID-19 and other challenges from 2020 till date.

Nigeria is faced with serious fiscal difficulties, shrinking revenues and mounting debts that must be serviced yearly and for which a Daniel is

unlikely to come to judgment in the face of Shylock-creditors. Loan servicing eats close to 90% of the national budget and makes the budget watery and hollow.

Faced with all these, the challenges of underdevelopment are not about to be addressed. They are about to grow with spiral terrifying consequences – the type that ignited the Arab Spring on the street of Tunis with just an ordinary hawkker, who in hunger and frustration, set the revolution on by self-immolation.

Government will be pretending to say it is not anxious and not fretful over the consequences of a national vault that is nearly empty in a pre-election season full of anger, disappointments and bitterness.

**Governors' 33 recommendations to rescue an economy in rags**

In fact, the 36 states' governments met not too long ago under the aegis of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) and drew up for Mr. President, 33-point recommendations to save the economy from collapse.

Most of the proposal focused on getting government cut down its over bloated size; ensuring the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) does its job of monetary control properly; cutting down on unnecessary overheads; among several other measures.

Curiously, the governors want Abuja to introduce a flat 3% Federal Personal Income Tax (FPIT) on all Nigerians earning more than N30,000 per month while those earning less than N30,000 per month, whether employed or not, including farmers and traders be compelled to pay a monthly FPIT of N100.

As good as the recommendations appear, it would seem the rich and those in government are perpetually focused on ensuring joy does not come to the impoverished. Why levy hungry, jobless citizens?

## **Nailing telecoms on the cross to salvage Nigeria**

It is true that there cannot be an 'Open Sesame' formula to redeeming Nigeria and government must, by all means, raise money to avoid total collapse and so it is rightly seeking to squeeze out funds through additional taxation and the telecoms sector has come naturally under its focus.

The telecoms sector despite Nigeria's low country perception has not been doing badly. Foreign investment into the sector is one of the highest the country has recorded in 72 months to rapidly close the gap clusters from as high as 217 to 114 in a way that has further made telecom services accessible to millions of Nigerians.



There are now no less than 53,460 3G and 4G Base Transceiver Stations (BTS) in the country. It was about 30,000 in 2015 while fibre optics deployments have increased from 47,000 kilometers to 54,725 kilometers within the same period.

Like the telecom regulator, Prof Umar Garba Danbatta, has reiterated, you have a sector that has significantly contributed to “GDP that grew from 8.5 per cent in the 4th quarter of 2015 to 12.61 in the 4th quarter of 2021, as the sector also attracted over \$2 billion in foreign direct investment over the period.”

For telecoms, success is become Albatross Yes! The telecoms industry is the poster child of success, that totem of hope under a climate of economic gloom. Unfortunately, too, its success is become its Albatross. There is considerable attention on the sector by government not necessarily to positively grow it but to squeeze it repeatedly and ravenously not minding that it could be potentially squeezed to extinction.

This is why, for good reasons, the Minister of the Communications and Digital Economy, Prof. Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami, is worried and has challenged the decision to implement the telecoms tax influenced by the Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning led by Dr. Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed.

The telecom sector is apprehensive. For a sector that has grown in leaps and bounds in spite of several challenges, the 5% tax is an additional burden. It becomes more worrisome to stakeholders considering the rising cost of doing telecoms business just as is the case in other sectors.

The cost of producing a millisecond of voice or a byte of data is far higher in Nigeria than in many other countries because government policies and the general economic climate including high cost of diesel have connived to ensure operators can only provide services at higher costs.

With more than 53,460 3G and 4G BTS deployed nationwide to keep the

**Like the telecom regulator, Prof Umar Garba Danbatta, has reiterated, you have a sector that has significantly contributed to “GDP that grew from 8.5 per cent in the 4th quarter of 2015 to 12.61 in the 4th quarter of 2021, as the sector also attracted over \$2 billion in foreign direct investment over the period.**

network functional 24/7, telecom infrastructure owners need diesel which is now scarce and costly by over 5000% to feed at least two power generators for a single BTS. Do the mathematics; the cost of producing one minute of call in Lagos is far higher than in Accra. Consumers ultimately bear this cost.

#### *A harassed telecoms sector*

The industry is still contending with a myriad of taxes, levies across the states and is just beginning to get succor after decades of battling issues around right of way (RoW) in all the 36 states.

Then, there is the issue of rising insecurity. The increasing cases of vandalism of telecoms infrastructure country-wide and risk to safety of telecoms personnel. It is not getting any better for network operators.

Earlier in the year, operators suggested increasing tariffs by up to 40% on telecoms services to reflect market realities. The telecoms regulatory agency turned down the request. On the surface, it would appear the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) is more concerned about the possible negative impact of the tariff increase on consumers and other sectors than the genuine challenges of the operators.

But in a deeper sense, the regulator was not going to allow inflation of an already vulnerable economy and not within a sector directly under its purview.

As it is now, the finance ministry, hungry for money and desperate to close budget gaps, has gotten the presidential nod to execute what the telecoms regulator was not amenable to. Has the chicken come to roost for already overwhelmed operators and consumers? Minister Pantami thinks so. He does not buy the suasion to further tax the sector.

#### **Taxing the poor, pampering the rich**

Telecoms will ultimately get additionally taxed. For the ministry of finance, there is no going back. However, what is somewhat perplexing is why government is looking less at taxing the super-rich and the well-to-do or the army of 'wanna-be' in the realm of exaggerated wealth for which many Nigerians are known. Why should luxury tax apply only to Fanta and Pepsi or Seven Up that the poor man struggles to drink or the

Trophy beer many poor people use to drown away the evil visited upon them by a government that seeks to further distance itself from the pains of the poor?

Why leave taxing the luxury homes in Abuja, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Kaduna and elsewhere in the country; the luxury vehicles and super-bikes; and the general activities of the rich to go after the throats of the poor?

While government dither over creating right environment for an innovative economy, the telecoms sector has inspired other industries to become more economically dynamic and to help foster a new generation of new ventures and entrepreneurs – all private sector led and all definers of a greater Nigeria.

Have you ever used the services of a fintech entrepreneur providing unique financial services driven by telecom infrastructures; or the thousands of Nigerians operating POS services (including that barber and Mama Put); or those new breed entrepreneurs delivering agricultural and other products directly to your home via orders made through Whatsapp or other social media handles in a redefinition of low-profile eCommerce?

These are among the people that will suffer the direct impact of the telecoms tax while the property owner in Abuja or owner of posh sport car continue to luxuriate in an economic bubble underwritten by a broke country.

Government must get more creative at expanding its tax frontiers. When you introduce property levies, it is likely that owners of multiple properties will rather lower the cost of rent to ensure the properties are not empty if only to raise enough money in order to pay the statutory annual levies.

Why is it easier to levy the poor than the luxurious pleasure of the super-rich? Government has an obligation to protect the poor; and not over-burden an industry that directly impacts on their wellbeing. Government has a duty to tax but it must rethink its tax model to not kill the donkey that helps in plowing the field. The telecoms sector deserves to be supported and promoted not taxed to death. Certainly not at a time like this.

## NADDC's Aliyu engages auto companies in Japan for more investments into Nigeria



The Director General of the National Automotive Design and Development Council (NADDC) recently had extensive discussions in Japan to encourage the big auto players expand their portfolio of investments in Nigeria's burgeoning auto industry.

Aliyu together with the Nigerian Ambassador to Japan, His Excellency, Husaini Moriki, and Chairman House Committee on Industry, Honourable Dr. Enitan Badru, met with key auto manufacturers that included Toyota, Honda, Nissan, Mitsubishi, Isuzu, Suzuki and Yamaha at meetings held in the various Japanese cities of Tokyo, Yokohama, Hamamatsu and Iwata during the four days strategic business engagements.

The discussions focused on achieving bigger investments by these global companies to set up mega production and assembly plants in Nigeria. It was also intended to strengthen the already existing presence of some of the global auto makers in Nigeria as a result of the implementation of the National Automotive Industry Development Plan (NAIDP) by the NADDC.

The implementation of the NAIDP has encouraged building vehicles in Nigeria through Honda West Africa, Nissan/Stallion, Toyota/Elizade, Mitsubishi/CFAO, Suzuki/Boulos, Isuzu/Kewalrams and Yamaha/CFAO.

Shopping for more investments and collaborations

But Mr. Aliyu with the team is shopping for more investments and collaborations. He wants a Japanese private sector led partnership that will ensure the local production of higher number of vehicles to meet not only local demands but Nigeria's pan-Africa export initiative to successfully leverage the opportunities for export of made-in-Nigeria vehicles under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

According to Aliyu, the discussions with the companies were very fruitful with strong potential for the various manufacturers to significantly increase their operations and market footprint in Nigeria and contribute at an even higher level to sustainability of the Nigerian automotive industry.



## Beware of unregistered crowdfunding platforms – Securities and Exchange Commission alerts Nigerians

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has asked Nigerians to be wary of investing their funds in unregistered crowdfunding platforms warning that they risk losing such investments.

The SEC in a recent circular this month warned that unregistered investment crowdfunding platforms are illegal and provide no lawful cover for investors.

### Unregistered crowdfunding platforms risk prosecution

Part of the circular states: “The Commission by this circular hereby notifies the general public and operators of unregistered crowdfunding platforms, that operating any crowdfunding platform that is not registered by the Commission is illegal and may lead to prosecution of such operators and loss of investment by their clients.

“Members of the public are further advised to confirm the registration status of any entity soliciting their participation in any investment scheme by contacting the Commission through its website: [sec.gov.ng](http://sec.gov.ng)

According to Investopedia, crowdfunding is the use of small amounts of capital from a large number of individuals to finance a new business venture. Crowdfunding allows ventures to raise funds to finance a project or business from the public through an online platform. A crowdfunding portal is a website, portal, intermediary portal, application, or other similar module that facilitates interaction between fundraisers and the

investing public

Crowdfunding has grown to become a popular method of raising funds for numerous small enterprises and creative projects worldwide. Statista is forecasting the global crowdfunding segment to reach US\$1.02bn in 2022.

### SEC's rules for crowdfunding platforms

The SEC first published its crowdfunding rules in January 2021 and requested crowdfunding platforms to register with the commission in order to sanitise the sub-sector and protect both investors and genuine operators from fraudsters.

By the rules of the SEC, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) incorporated in Nigeria with a minimum of two years of operating track record are eligible to raise funds through a crowdfunding portal registered by SEC, with total fees payable to parties to a crowdfunding issue shall not exceed two per cent of the total funds raised.

Under this regulation, the maximum amount which might be raised by a medium enterprise shall not exceed N100 million.

Part of rules state: “The maximum amount which may be raised by a small enterprise shall not exceed N70 million, and the maximum amount which may be raised by a micro-enterprise shall not exceed N50 million.

“The limits set forth above shall not apply to MSMEs operating as digital commodities investment platforms or such other MSMEs as may be designated by the commission from time to time,” part of the guidelines said.

## Government needs to make more commitments to startups, says Lognetics boss



Nigeria needs to commit more policy support and funding to make the local startup ecosystem sustainable, CEO of Lognetics, a tech brand agency, Light Ihesiulo, has said.

While the ecosystem remains Africa's shining light attracting more global funding and mentorship than any other country on the continent, local startups still lack sufficient government presence in keeping their ideas or

innovation afloat, said Ihesiulo.

Lognetics, a product branding agency, focuses on creating attention-grabbing, and functional strategies that drives business growth. To up the game for its more than 300 clients, Lognetics is leveraging virtual reality system and other emerging technologies.

“Lack of commitment from the government is affecting the rate at which start-ups in the tech space grow in Nigeria,” said Ihesiulo while stressing his own company struggle to stay above the tide without government support. for

“Imagine if we had funding from government, we would have been able to achieve a lot. In the course of building this agency, finance would have limited us. But we had to put in so much personal efforts to make sure we succeed” he stated.

Ihesiulo, who was speaking at a function recently in Abuja, said difficult in accessing fund including loan at single interest rates has erased the potential of many startups for mid to long term sustainability. The sector cannot grow or be made to become more productive to national economy without finding.

“Most of the challenges of startup businesses in the tech industry is funding,” he added.

## Airtel Africa to get \$125m revolving credit facility from Citi

Airtel Africa has signed a \$125 million revolving credit facility with Citi through its branch offices and subsidiaries in sub-Saharan Africa, the telecommunications and mobile money giant, announced this week.

The facility is in line with its strategy to raise debt in its local operating companies and will include both local currency and US dollar-denominated debt, Airtel Africa added. The company has operational presence in 14 countries across Africa.

"The facility has a tenor up to September 2024 and will be used to support Airtel Africa's operations and investments in four of its subsidiaries," the company said in an official statement filed with the Nigerian Exchange Limited.

The statement added: "Our sustainability strategy has four focused pillars—each with specific and measurable goals or commitments. It is designed to reduce as well as mitigate our impact on the environment and to support communities through digital access.

"We believe that this will help to develop a sustainable future for individuals, families, communities and businesses across Africa," CEO of Airtel Africa, Olusegun Ogunsanya, said in the launch document.

## Adamawa checkmates revenue leakages with Interswitch's Paydirect

The Adamawa state government has deployed Paydirect, a secure web-based Interswitch collections solution that enables corporates and government organisations receive payments made by their distributors, agents and customers into their accounts from all of the 24 banks in Nigeria.

The deal should help the north eastern state to improve payment collections and processing as well as strengthen government's capacity for digital

Paydirect will also help the state government will ensure transparency in revenue collection, and bills payment while checking revenue leakages.

Paydirect allows government agencies and corporate organisations to collect and monitor revenue across various channels such as banks, Point of Sales (PoS) terminals, Internet banking, and the Quickteller (web, mobile, ATM, and USSD) platform.

## eNaira records N4b transactions, 200,000 users in 9 months – Emefiele



The eNaira has recorded 200,000 volumes and four billion naira value of transactions since its inauguration in October 2021, the Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr Godwin Emefiele, has revealed this week in Abuja.

Emefiele spoke at the grand finale of the 'eNaira Hackathon' – an initiative of the CBN in collaboration with the African Fintec Foundry (AFF).

The NAN reports that the hackathon is aimed at bringing together teams of talented entrepreneurs, developers, designers, solution developers, problem-solvers and 'code magicians' from Africa to develop innovative solutions for improved adoption of the eNaira.

The competition was part of efforts by the CBN to drive financial inclusion, facilitate macroeconomic growth and integrate the Nigerian economy into the world-leading economies through innovation and cutting-edge emerging technologies.

With the launch of the eNaira last year by President Muhammadu Buhari, Nigeria made history as the first African country to launch a Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC).

Emefiele said eNaira had reached 840,000 downloads with about 270,000 active wallets comprising more than 252,000 consumer wallets and 17,000 merchant wallets since it went live.

The digital currency will enhance financial inclusion, support poverty reduction, enable direct welfare disbursement to citizens, support a resilient payments ecosystem and improve availability and usability of central bank money, said Emefiele.

His words: "The eNaira will also facilitate diaspora remittances, reduce the cost of processing cash, and also reduce cost and improve efficiency of cross-border payment.

"The eNaira will make a significant positive difference to Nigeria and Nigerians. It was also developed to provide Nigerians with a cheap, safe and trusted means of payment.

"It is unlike the offline payments channels like agent networks, USSD, wearables, cards and near field communication technology.

## Telecom sector attracts \$2b in foreign direct investment in six years – Danbatta



The telecoms sector got a whopping \$2 billion from offshore investors between the first quarter of 2015 and fourth quarter of 2021, the Executive Vice Chairman of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), Prof. Umar Garba Danbatta, has revealed.

The telecoms regulator said the inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) has helped to drive infrastructure deployment in leaps and bounds in a way that has enhanced quality of service and growth of other sectors.

He spoke during a recent briefing of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy, Dr. William Alo, who lauded the NCC for its remarkable strides.

“The entire country, and beyond, is fully aware of the strategic importance of the NCC as a regulating institution of the telecommunications industry in

Nigeria. And, of course, we are aware today that between oil and communications, the latter is gradually taking over in the provision of revenue for the country as the nation strives to diversify the economy,” said Alo.

The investment within the period has impacted significantly on the telecom sector, according to Danbatta. He said the access gap clusters in the country has been reduced from 217 to 114 to enable 15 million Nigerians have access to telecommunications services, and increase of fibre optics deployments from 47,000 kilometers to 54,725 kilometers.

Also, “the 3G and 4G Base Transceiver Stations (BTS) in the country has increased from less than 30,000 in 2015 to 53,460 while seven VSAT gateway earth stations have been licensed to boost broadband penetration in the country.”

In his briefing, Prof Danbatta listed successes recorded since 2015 in teledensity, broadband penetration, and significant contribution of the industry to “the gross domestic product (GDP) that grew from 8.5 per cent in the 4th quarter of 2015 to 12.61 in the 4th quarter of 2021, as the sector also attracted over \$2 billion in foreign direct investment over the period.”

Danbatta, who provided a detailed briefing about the achievements of the regulatory body and its efforts toward addressing all the challenges confronting the industry, intimated the permanent secretary with the key focus and targets of the NCC through the launched of the Strategic Vision (Implementation) Plan SVP 2021 – 2025, which took into consideration, the provisions of the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy 2020-2030, and National Broadband Plan 2020-2025.

He said the SVP, which streamlines all policies for a robust sectoral lifting and relevance, has five focus areas which include: operational efficiency and regulatory excellence; facilitation of infrastructure provision for the digital economy; promotion of fair competition, inclusive growth and investment; improvement of quality of service and quality of experience; and facilitation of strategic collaboration and partnership.

Other key achievements of the NCC under him include the recent successful auction of 3.5GHz spectrum for 5G services, licensing of 7 fibre optics infrastructure providers, and adding up to 38,296 kilometers of fibre optic in the country.

## FG lauds seven Nigerian startups that emerged winners at ITU/WITS championships

The Federal Government has lauded seven Nigerian startups in a recognition ceremony where the Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Professor Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami, presented the global champions with awards and cash prizes to further encourage them.

The presentation was made on behalf of President Muhammadu Buhari in Abuja this week to the startups for winning International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and World Information Technology Society (WITS) championships for three consecutive years.

The president assured that government

will continue to support the startup community, ensure the passage of the Nigerian Startup Bill into law; and seek continuous collaboration with the private sector to drive real economic growth.

The startups won the ITU and WITS championships and awards in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

President Buhari described the startups as bearing testimonials that Nigeria is capable of producing the likes of Jeff Bezos, Mark Zuckerberg and Bill Gates while noting that they have made the country proud within the global space.

The awardees are Franca Umasoye Igwe of Afrilingo; Martha Alade of Women and Girls Pivoting Resilience in the Digital Economy in Africa; Rachael Inegbedion of Special Needs Initiative for Growth (Initiative For National Growth Africa). Others are Ms. Maryam Abdulsalam of Women's Technology Empowerment Centre; access to Information and Knowledge; Mr. Oluwaseyi Akinola of Chipsbrain Nigeria, Mr. Samuel Babatunde of Green Fresh Nigeria and Mr. Wisdom Ikpechukwu of Wizwish International Farm.

ies of the ITU for the winners to emerge.

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# NIPOST assures on implementation of digital postcode this year

The Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) has assured that it will begin the implementation of the digital postcode system or digital addressing system (DAS) before year end to boost Nigeria's revenue generation and curb insecurity.

The Director, Corporate Communications, NIPOST, Mr. Franklin Alao, gave the assurance this week in Abuja at a media interaction.

According to him, plans were already in top gear to achieve a digital postcode system in Nigeria before the end of this year.

He said the implementation will boost the

country's revenue generation and tackle insecurity.

NIPOST is implementing the digital addressing system (DAS) under the National Digital Addressing System (NDAS) developed by it on behalf of the government of Nigeria. The platform empowers NIPOST to provide an address for any location in Nigeria, and the postal sorting information to the address and direction to the address in few seconds.

The country's Postmaster General and CEO of NIPOST, Dr Ismail Adewusi, had weeks back reiterated the postal agency's commitment to have digitalised postcode system in order to improve the ease of doing business and enhance economic activities across the country.

Adewusi said the digitalization of the postcode system would facilitate better sorting, delivery of mail, and better response to emergencies by security agencies, to help checkmate activities of bandits, kidnappers and Internet scammers.

The Postmaster General added that the system will also engender effective healthcare delivery system, more efficient revenue and tax collections as well as utility bills distribution.

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## MTN Nigeria to raise N200 billion for network expansion



Telecoms giant MTN will be issuing two tranches of bonds ranging from four to 10 year tenors to raise new funds, about N200 billion, to partly finance its network expansion.

Bonds are investment

securities allowing investor lend money to a company or a government for an agreed period of time in exchange for regular interest payments. At the maturity date, the principal amount is paid back in full or risk default.

The opening date for the new bond issue is yet to be decided but in those with knowledge of the plans sources said the new capital raising would be undertaken through the book-building method.

This is an auction-like, bid-

based process that usually targets investment firms and high networth investors.

The network operator said the fresh fund will help finance capital expenditure, particularly network expansion, as well as “working capital management and general corporate purpose.”

The deal will allow MTN to offer a tranche of four-year bonds and another tranche of 10-year bonds; all as fixed rate senior unsecured bonds under

its new N200 billion bond issuance programme.

The bond will be offered at a par value of N1000 with minimum subscription of 10000 or N10 million. The new bonds are expected to be listed on the FMDQ Securities Exchange Limited after the completion of the issuance.

With over 60 million subscribers, MTN is the leading mobile operator in Nigeria with a market share of 37.9 percent as at February 2022.

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## Nigeria investigates Philips Consulting, UBA for data privacy violations

The Nigerian government is investigating Philips Consulting and the United Bank for Africa (UBA) PLC for allegedly violating Article 4 of the Nigeria Data Protection Regulations (NDPR), the country's principal legislation on data privacy.

Article 4 of the NDPR imposed obligations in respect of 'Handling Personal Data' of data subjects (individuals) by data controllers which include organisations such as the UBA and Philips Consulting.

According to privacy ombudsman, Nigeria Data Protection Bureau (NDPB), a forensic investigation is being carried out based on “the complaint against Philips Consulting in connection with the activities of online lending platforms who willfully breach the privacy of citizens whilst the investigation of UBA PLC pertains to allegations of infringement on the

governing principles of data protection.”

A statement issued by the Bureau on Monday in Abuja notes in part, “Following complaints of violation of the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation against Philips Consulting and United Bank for Africa PLC, the Nigeria Data Protection Bureau National Commissioner, Dr. Vincent Olatunji, has ordered a forensic investigation in line with Article 4 of the NDPR.

“The Bureau further warned all data controllers and processors to refrain from all forms of data processing that were detrimental to citizens, the economy, and security of Nigeria.”

In June, the data watchdog commenced investigations into reports of breach of data privacy involving Wema Bank PLC and KC Gaming Networks (Bet Naija) as part of initiatives to sanitize privacy lapses in corporate Nigeria.

## Nigeria sets up Presidential Technical Working Committee to review IPPIS, GIFMIS, TSA



Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Professor Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami has inaugurated a Presidential Technical Committee to review some payment platforms in the public sector including the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information Systems (IPPIS), Government Integrated Financial Management Information Systems (GIFMIS) and the Single Treasury Account (TSA).

The committee will be chaired by the Minister of the Communications and Digital Economy, Prof. Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami while Director General of the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Mallam Kachifu Inuwa Abdullahi, will serve as its secretary.

According to Prof. Pantami, the technical committee has been mandated by President Muhammadu Buhari to review the strengths, weaknesses and challenges of these payment tools while also advising the president on how best to improve them.

Other members of the committee are Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Mrs. Zainab Ahmed, Head of Civil Service of the Federation, Mrs. Folashade Yemi-Esan, Auditor General of the Federation, Aghughu Adolphus, Chairman, Economic Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mr. Abdurashheed Bawa, Director General, Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR), Dr. Dasuki Arabi, Managing Director of Galaxy Backbone Limited, Prof. Muhammad Abubakar, and Chairman, National Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission (NSIWC), Ekpo Nta Esq.

Pantami, while giving an overview of the IPPIS, GIFMIS and the TSA

deployed in 2006, 2012 and 2015 respectively, have not fully complied with the provisions of the NITDA Act 2007.

His words: "At the time they were deployed, the provisions of NITDA, Act 2007, section A, of setting the standardisation of ICT deployment in Federal Public Institutions were not followed. Because of this, these three systems were not subjected to government certification and IT project clearance as required by law and many other government policies".

Despite this shortcoming, the platforms have made considerable achievements, the minister said.

IPPIS has saved government over N120 billion and the TSA has brought a saving in excess of N10 trillion naira since their deployments, he added.

His words: "These figures show us that the government has recorded some major gains with their deployment but there is need to improve on them. Particularly with the recent allegations coming up that these systems are being exploited by evil people where they siphon money", he stated.

Part of the committee's task is help beef up the quality of service of the platforms even as the minister noted that errors have been detected in IPPIS when reviewed by NITDA. All three systems including GIFMIS and the TSA will be critically reviewed to eliminate leakages, errors and other challenges in their processes.

Government functionaries at the inauguration included the Permanent Secretary, Career Management Office of the Civil Service of the Federation, Dr. Marcus Olaniyi, Board Chairman of the Nigerian Communications Commission, Prof. Adeolu Akande, Board Chairman of the Nigerian Postal Service, Barrister Maimuna Yaya Abubakar, Executive Vice Chairman of the Nigerian Communications Commission, Prof. Umar Danbatta, and the National Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian Data Protection Bureau, Dr. Vincent Olatunji.

## Governors want telcos, NIMC to manage deductions from people earning less than 30k to rescue Nigeria

Telecom companies and the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) will be playing a critical role in 33-point recommendations made by state governors under the aegis of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) to President Muhammadu Buhari to save the economy from collapse.

The governors have asked Abuja to introduce a flat 3% Federal Personal Income Tax

(FPIT) on all Nigerians earning more than N30,000 per month to beef of the national treasury with about N100 billion as part of efforts to rescue the country from financial blights.

The recommendations also proposed that Nigerians earning less than N30, 000 per month, whether employed or not, including farmers and traders be made to pay a monthly FPIT of N100.

The proposal advised that telecom companies and the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) should collaborate to ensure deduction of this from phone credit of individuals linked to National Identification Number (NIN) and Bank Verification Number (BVN).

The governors expressed worries that national earning has continue to dip fearing its negative impact across

sectors could further worsen the state of affairs. They want President Buhari to regard the 30 recommendations as urgent measures to save the economy and stir Nigeria towards a new path of growth as the 2023 elections draw near.

Below is a comprehensive list of the containing the 2022 estimated savings expected from the implementation of the proposed measures.

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"The Bureau further warned all data controllers and processors to refrain from all forms of data processing that were detrimental to citizens, the economy, and security of Nigeria."

In June, the data watchdog commenced investigations into reports of breach of data privacy involving Wema Bank PLC and KC Gaming Networks (Bet Naija) as part

of initiatives to sanitize privacy lapses in corporate Nigeria.

The statement signed by its Legal, Enforcement & Regulations Lead, Babatunde B. Bamigboye adds:

"The NDPR mandates organizations to carry out due diligence before engaging in any data processing. This is to ensure that parties are accountable for any infringement on fundamental rights and freedoms of data subjects.

"The Bureau warns all data controllers and processors to eschew all forms of data processing that are detrimental to citizens as well as the economy and security of the country."

## Nigeria directs mobile payment companies, telcos to block access to online loan firms



Executive Vice Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of the FCCPC, Babatunde Irukera, this week in Lagos revealed this when the commission conducted enforcement actions against a loan company known as Soko Lending Limited.

He said "FCCPC has also ordered telecommunication/ technology companies (including Mobile Network Operators (MNOs)) to cease and desist providing server/hosting, or other key services such as connectivity to disclosed or known lenders who are targets/subjects of investigation or otherwise operating without regulatory approval.

"The inter-agency Joint Regulatory and Enforcement Task Force has developed and mutually adopted a Limited Interim Regulatory/Registration Framework and Guidelines for Digital Lending, 2022 as the first and interim step to establishing a clear regulatory framework."

Telcos and PSOs are to stop providing support that enables the operations of online money lenders carry out their operations that authorities have described as illegal. Online money lenders have gained notoriety as loan sharks.

Telcos include MTN, Glo, Airtel and 9Mobile while PSOs are the likes of Flutterwave, Monify, Paystack and Opay.

Irukera, said the FCCPC was already working to protect citizens by disabling or diminishing violators' ability to circumvent regulatory efforts even as he described Soko Lending Limited as a serial violator.

His words: "Soko Lending appears to be the most consequential digital money lender with multiple apps and brand names covering a significant share of the digital/online lending market, and one of the most prolific actors in violating consumer privacy, fair lending terms and ethical loan repayment/recovery practices."

All online loan firms have been barred from accessing mobile payment companies or payment systems operators (PSOs) and telecoms networks by the Federal Competition and Consumers Protection Commission (FCCPC).

The move by government effectively closes the window against online loan operators accused of violating customers rights and the country's privacy laws.

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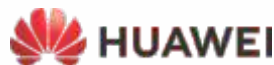
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