COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE NIGERIA INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM (NIGF 2018) HELD AT THE SHEHU MUSA YARADUA CENTRE, ABUJA ON JULY 3, 2018

A. Introduction:

To facilitate stakeholders' intervention on the use of Internet for the enthronement of good governance for national economic recovery; stimulate the Internet community open participation in a regional and global Internet policy dialogue on emerging Internet issues; and engage stakeholders toward effective monitoring of the implementation of National Economic & Growth Plan and Sustainable Development Goals through the use of the Internet as an enabler, the Nigeria Internet Governance Forum (NIGF) 2018 was held at the Shehu Musa Yaradua Centre, Abuja, on July 3, 3018. Aptly, the theme was: "**Internet as enabler for good governance**."

As part of the objectives, a pre-NIGF Youth Workshop was organized on July 2, 2018 to empower the youth for greater Internet productivity and innovations. In addition to presentations and discussions focused on digital opportunities and means of accessing them, and wealth creation through digital intellectual property, there were demonstration of digital products by some youth start-ups.

The plenary session of the main NIGF was declared open by the Honorable Minister of Communications,
Barr. Abdul-Raheem Adebayo Shittu, who equally delivered a special keynote address. Rev. Sunday Folayan, President of Nigeria Internet Registration Association (NIRA) in a presentation, outlined the impact of Internet governance process in Nigeria in the last six years. Distinguished paper was presented by Dr. (Mrs.) Oby Ezekwesili, Senior Economic

Advisor, Africa Economic Development Policy Initiative (AEDPI) on "Internet as an Enabler of Accountability and Transparency."

To critically address the theme of the Forum, five sub-themes, which formed the focus of the track sessions presentations and panel discussions, were considered, with topics on *Enabling Citizen Inclusion in Good Governance*, *Using Internet to Fight Economic Corruption*, *Internet Digital Rights And Privacy*, *Fiscal Transparency For Sustainable Development*, *And Internet Broadband For Good Governance*. Furthermore, Dr. Steve Bassey delivered a paper on impact of EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on national data protection, Mr. Chuks Onuoha on *Internet Safeguard For Electoral Process*, Mr. Emmanuel Edet from National Information Technology Development Agency delivered a presentation on *Enhancing Multi-stakeholder Cooperation and Citizens Engagement in Policy Making & Implementation* and Mr. Mamman Ahmadu on Nigeria Open Contracting Portal (NOCOPO).

Over 400 stakeholders attended the forum including participants from public institutions, private sector groups, civil societies, professional bodies, academic community, technical community students and youths, military and para-military organizations, media, security and law enforcement agencies, ICT industry, internet users, and the public. Also in attendance were scholars, research scientists and representative from the National Assembly, States and local governments.

B. Observations

The Forum observed that:
i. To realize the national economic development vision, articulated through the National Economic Recovery and Growth Plan by the government, the youths must be seen as major stakeholder and key player.
ii. However, regrettably, almost half of employable Nigerians, most of who are youths, are unemployed or under-employed. This is compounded by the fact that the curriculum in many institutions in Nigeria have little or no significant economic value. Consequently, many college graduates are not employable.
iii. Equality of opportunity provided by the Internet is possible if there is equality of access to the Internet. However, equality of access is greatly hindered by poverty.
iv. Technological advancements in ICT and the Internet are equally used by corrupt officials and criminals to sabotage national economy and siphon funds in a very sophisticated manner.
v. Government businesses are still mostly manually operated, giving room for economic corruption.

vi.   Many legacy laws are creating huge barriers to the use of the Internet in the fight against corruption.

vii. The world is shifting rapidly in the structure of production of values. Unfortunately, we are not keeping pace. Africa cannot afford to continue to be consumers.

C. Recommendations:

The following recommendations were proffered and adopted by participants:

1. The youths must be empowered and activated in order to play major and active roles in the actualization of the National Economic Recovery and Growth Plan. One way is reviewing of academic curricula to pay more emphasis on entrepreneurship and vocational skills acquisition.
2. The adoption and use of ICT technologies and the Internet should be enforced to enable systematic auditing of the activities of the three tiers of government.
3. Creating and harnessing electronic platforms and initiatives to raise awareness amongst key stakeholders involved in mitigating the effects of economic corruption and enlightenment of citizens on ongoing efforts.
4. Government accounting and budgeting should be made transparent and open to citizens through Internet platforms, such as being done by stakeholders. E.g BudgIT and other key actors.
5. Investigative processes involved in tackling economic corruption should be more scientific- and intelligence-driven.
6. Citizens, in the exercise of their fundamental right, must demand the quality of governance they desire. They have a right to equality of power with the government. To encourage this, government should create portal to serve as a platform for participations towards good governance.
7. Fiscal Transparency education should be established such that the Internet is employed in the dissemination, with the cooperation of NITDA and Ministry of Communications.
8. Citizens should leverage on the Internet to be kept abreast of developments in the country. Knowledge is a key requirement in the exercise of right to demand good governance.
9. Citizens should shun the act of propagating fake news and rumour as it could be damaging to governance.
10. The government, in its mandate of ensuring the protection, must avoid the invasion of its citizens' privacy.
11. There should be an inclusion of intellectual property rights. As the evolution of the internet and its governance is fundamentally influenced most of the time by Innovation, it is important to find a way of equally protecting innovation. We are

currently faced with a lot of challenges as a country and it is our hope that there will be a lot of changes championed by the internet.

Enabling Citizen Inclusion in Good Governance;

12. Government should extend voting right to Nigeria Citizens in diaspora.
13. Government should create portal for people's participations for good governance.
14. There should be review of academic curricula to pay more emphasis on entrepreneurship and vocational skills acquisition.
15. There should be continuous and sustained campaign awareness about government policies in different languages
16. Implementation of all government policies should be inclusive of all gender and people with special needs
17. There should be promotion of ethical values through patriotism, review of governance institutions and national re-orientation.
18. There should be continuous and sustained provision of digital access to the served and underserved sections of the society.
19. As technology is disrupting our lives, citizens need to be more innovative and proactive towards government policy formulation.
20. Citizens should go to school with a mindset to graduate and create jobs and not to get job.

On Using Internet to Fight Economic Corruption;

To effectively curtail corruption, the following are recommended:

21. The adoption and use of ICT technologies and the Internet should be enforced to enable systematic auditing of the activities of the three tiers of government.
22. Creating and harnessing electronic platforms and initiatives to raise awareness amongst key stakeholders involved in mitigating the effects of economic corruption and enlightenment of citizens on ongoing efforts.
23. Government accounting and budgeting should be made transparent and open to citizens through Internet platforms, such as BudgIT, etc.
24. Investigative processes involved in tackling economic corruption should be more scientific and intelligence-driven.
25. Creating a framework for public-private partnership in the use of ICT and Internt to fight corruption.
26. There should prioritize policy on economic empowerment and implementation that would reduce public appetite for corruption.

Cyber Security & Trust: Internet Digital Right and Privacy;

27. Nigerian Citizens need to be more proactive by knowing what the government and corporate organisation are doing and have done with our personal identifiable information.
28. There should be more transparency and reporting of cyber attacks, breach of privacy and misuse of data cases to the general public.
29. We should always hold the government accountable towards the formulation and implementation of policies, laws and regulations.
30. More awareness and sensitization needs to be done towards citizen's fundamental digital rights.
31. As citizens we should all ensure we are abreast with the laws, and regulations surrounding our digital life and privacy.
32. Nigeria needs more robust and efficient laws and regulations on cybersecurity, data protection and privacy.

On Fiscal Transparency for Sustainable Development;

33. The Federal Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Budget and National Planning should float an interactive portal that gives the CSO and other organizations a platform to express their ideas and criticism.
34. Fiscal Transparency education should be established such that the Internet is employed in the dissemination, with the cooperation of NITDA and Ministry of Communications.
35. The participants were encouraged to develop simple technology applications that can be pushed out at low cost which can automate transparency processes (in the government and public sector)
36. The National Assembly should ensure a quick passage of bills which should be made available to the public thus helping in the economic recovery.
37. There should be a revisit to the NEED II document.
38. There should be a movement away from SDG projects to more of SDG Education.

On Internet Broadband for Open Governance

39. Increase the education of both government and the governed to use broadband resources responsibly and for the benefit of the citizens.

40. Stakeholders should help define the extent to which broadband is said to have penetrated a location or a community
41. Enforce our rights to access timely open governance process by leveraging available internet broadband
42. Educate the public on the significance of all communications and interconnection infrastructure as Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) for open and good governance.
43. There is a need to push for localization of the country's data to keep our data in line with our territorial boundaries and sovereignty
44. Local infrastructure and service providers should be encouraged by patronizing their services and holding them to high standards
45. Government agencies need to be pushed to use their websites and electronic services to make life easier for citizens. They should also be helped to see the value of Internet services to help transparency and accountability.
46. We should consider changes to the models for reaching the unconnected so that more people can be brought online.

SIGNED

Mrs. Mary Uduma,
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