**PRESENTATION OF POLICY STATEMENT BY DR. (MRS.) OMOBOLA JOHNSON, HONOURABLE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA, AT THE WSIS+10 HIGH LEVEL EVENT HOLDING IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND FROM 10-13 JUNE 2014**

**Protocol**

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to be presenting a policy statement on behalf of the Federal Republic of Nigeria at this High Level Event of the WSIS Forum.

**ICT Policy Focus**

Looking back over 10 years of WSIS implementation, Nigeria has made modest achievements in the development of an Information Society in a country as vast, and diversified as ours. As you may already be aware, Nigeria has experienced phenomenal growth in its telecommunication sector as a result of the purposeful and deliberate execution of government policy on liberalization and competition over a decade. As at February 2014, our teledensity stands at 92% and the mobile telephony market in Nigeria has been adjudged one of the fastest growing mobile markets in the world. Nigeria now has over 129 million registered mobile cell phone subscribers and Internet subscription at over 50 million.

Over and above the telecoms sector, the combined ICT sector is the fastest growing sector of the economy, contributing about 8% to a rebased GDP of over $500bn. The Information and Communication Technology sector has become a catalyst that underpins the development of the other sectors of the Nigerian economy and a key enabler of government’s inclusive development and growth agenda.

**ICT Policy Priorities**

To build on these successes, the Ministry of Communication Technology was created in July 2011 to ensure an even sharper focus on the ICT sector and to better coordinate and align all government efforts in the administration of ICT throughout Nigeria.

To support the overarching government objectives for an Information Society, our policy priorities include connecting Nigerians to a ubiquitous and affordable ICT infrastructure and broadband; ensuring that there is relevant local content that will not only drive the utilization of this connectivity but will help to spurn new businesses that will drive our inclusiveness and job creation agenda; promoting the use and adoption of ICT in Government to drive transparency, effective public service delivery and citizen engagement;

Permit me to briefly highlight some of the policy actions that are helping us to evolve into an Information Society and are shaping the ICT industry towards our vision of being the ICT hub for Africa.

**Enabling Environment to deliver digital infrastructure**

Nigeria has a National Broadband Plan that seeks to promote pervasive deployment of broadband network infrastructure and services across Nigeria. Our target is to have 30% broadband penetration by 2017 up from 6% in 2011. This can only be done with the accelerated roll out of what is now termed digital infrastructure.

We are creating an enabling environment for the necessary infrastructure for broadband to be deployed through investment-friendly policies, enactment of appropriate legislations, and encouraging collaboration between national and sub-national government to eliminate or reduce all the obstacles to deploying digital infrastructure – this includes the planned delivery of additional undersea cable to other Nigerian coastal states to ease the deployment of terrestrial fibre; expediting the process of granting of right of ways and base station building permits and the pending auction of regional licences to significantly increase our terrestrial fibre deployment across the country. We also continue to free up spectrum for mobile wireless communication.

A Cybersecurity Bill that among other things seeks to designate our ICT infrastructure as Critical National Infrastructure is currently being debated in the National Assembly to be passed into law, recognising the need to protect this strategic infrastructure that is contributing positively to national growth and development.

**Local Content**

The participation of more Nigerians in the ICT sector as both producers and consumers of local content delivered over the internet serves towards our journey to becoming an information society.

Government is collaborating with the private sector to ensure increase in local content participation especially in the hardware, software and services sector. This includes mandating government MDAs to exclusively purchase locally assembled hardware and devices to support the growth of our local OEMs, intervening in the software development ecosystem by investing capital in the development of technology and innovation hubs run by the private sector and the creation of a government seeded venture capital fund. Some examples of our modest achievements in the area of local content include the direct distribution of subsidy of farm inputs to rural farmers through the e-wallet initiative that has reached 5 million farmers and has saved billions of naira in leakages due to the interference of middle men; a mobile phone based drug authentication platform that is used to confirm if a drug is fake or genuine saving thousands of lives of our citizens.

**ICT in Government**

We are committed to using ICT to improve internal efficiency in government by facilitating e-government, to enhance transparency, efficiency, productivity and citizen engagement.

Through the *‘Getting Government Online’* initiative, we want to use technology to transform government operations for effective service delivery; we are also establishing a *Government Contact Centre* with robust databases in each of the six geo-political zones of the country to facilitate efficient response to citizens’ requests. In line with our mandate, our Ministry is improving the quality of public service delivery by encouraging ministries, departments and agencies of government at all levels to create or migrate their websites to a standard domain name at ‘.gov.ng’.

Government is determined to enable citizens and other stakeholders access to government services that are being provided by Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) through the establishment of Government Service Portal -a single window technology that is aimed at enhancing accountability, improve the delivery and quality of public services, transform government processes to increase public administration efficiency, increase end-user productivity by integrating different services or data access paths of MDAs and to mainstream government’s non sensitive datasets on the portal.

State Governments are using ICT to reform their land registries to improve on efficiency and transparency in land administration. The land registries are being computerized to improve the document management system for land titles and transfers to enable citizens do online searches and get results within a short time and promptly.

Our Ministry is extending Internet access and opportunities for e-learning to secondary schools and tertiary institutions in Nigeria through the Education and ICT - School Knowledge Centre and Tertiary Institutions Access Programme initiatives. We are also collaborating with Nigeria’s Ministry of Education and National Universities Commission to facilitate learning, teaching, research and connectivity to the global academic world through the Nigeria Research and Education Network (NgREN) programme initiative.

A world class Network Operating Centre/Data Centre with excellent standards for security, redundant and resilient features amongst others, is being established to offer enterprise data hosting services. Through the 1Gov.net shared service platform initiative, we are striving to build confidence in the use of ICT by providing safe and secure IT infrastructure for the delivery of e-government services.

Our Open Data initiative is being implemented to leverage technology to operationalise Nigeria’s “Freedom of Information Act” and to make non-sensitive data sets available to the public online. The essence is for government to drive innovation, investment and economic growth, by enabling access to government data.

**Capacity Building and Youth Empowerment**

Conscious of the dearth in ICT skills in the country, Government is taking measures to empower our youths, especially girls and women with ICT skills for them to benefit from the abundant job opportunities that exist in the ICT sector, reduce unemployment and to promote gender inclusion. Accordingly, we are collaborating with the private sector to train 1000 girls on ICT skills and we have introduced Digital Girls Club in Secondary Schools in order to expose our girls to technology at the early stage of their lives, so that they could take up ICT as a career in the future.

Our journey towards the development of an information society in Nigeria is not without its challenges and constraints. We must put more effort into improving the digital literacy of our citizens and take sustainable measures to address issues of network and cyber security, privacy, confidentiality and the security of private information if we are to increase the confidence of our citizens to thrive and prosper in an information society.

Thank you for your kind attention.