



**REMARKS BY REV. SUNDAY FOLAYAN, CHAIR, AFRINIC, AT AFRINIC-27 OPENING CEREMONY, LAGOS, NIGERIA, 28 NOVEMBER 2017.**

- **H. E. Yemi Osibanjo: Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**
- **Hon. Bukola Saraki: President of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**
- **Hon. Adebayo Shittu: Minister of Federal Ministry of Communications**
- **Prof. Umaru Garba Danbatta: EVC/CEO of Nigeria Communications Commission (NCC)**
- **Dr. Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami: Director General of National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA)**
- **Distinguished delegates,**
- **Ladies & Gentlemen,**

Good Morning!

It's my pleasure on behalf of the AFRINIC Board to welcome you all to the 27<sup>th</sup> AFRINIC Public Policy Meeting being held in beautiful Lagos. (It is also an honour for H. E. the Vice President to join us here today despite his very busy schedule). This is our second and last meeting of 2017 and it is also the second time an AFRINIC Meeting is taking place in Nigeria after AFRINIC-6, which was held in Abuja in 2007.

Each year AFRINIC holds its Meetings in collaboration with a local host and we are therefore here courtesy of the Nigeria Internet Registration Association (NiRA). Let me take this opportunity to convey our heartfelt appreciation to NiRA for agreeing to host us and all the immense effort that they have put to make this meeting a reality.

As the regional Internet numbers registry for Africa, AFRINIC wishes to see a continent enjoying prosperity spurred by major factors such as digital inclusivity and the use of Internet and technology to sustainably improve the living standard of our population. In pursuing this vision, we are constantly looking for stakeholders such as governments, ISPs, Telecoms, the Internet Community, educational institutions as well as other key players all over the world so as to forge vital partnerships and alliances that will see our aspirations come true.

**(Your Excellency), Ladies and Gentleman,**

Over the last decade, Africa's Internet community has witnessed a period of exponential growth. Not only are we about to exhaust our IPv4 number resources through increased internet penetration, AFRINIC has also grown as an institution from only number resource management to also other projects and initiatives that champion the growth of Internet in the continent. This has been through the consensus, support and dedication of all our community, members and all our partners.

This support has ensured that AFRINIC operates within an inclusive policy framework that has ensured that Number Resources Management policies support careful and responsible expansion of Internet in Africa. 12 years later and with over 100 million addresses issued, we have played a significant role in ensuring Internet penetration levels in Africa are just shy of 30%. Of course we still have some work to do to increase these statistics and to reach out to the unconnected populace.

**(Your Excellency)**

The African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 Framework calls for increase accessed to information and communications technology as well as universal and affordable access to the Internet in Africa. There is definitely a lot more that AFRINIC in close collaboration with governments and the private sector to spur further investments in technology. Moreover, with a relatively young population, the continent should be well positioned to harness demographic dividends as it is projected that by 2045 our younger population would have surpassed those of other regions. With the right and deeply thought out responses to challenges such as cyber-security, literacy, costs and infrastructure, we as stakeholders can be able to provide the platform for the Internet to benefit all.

Our Public Policy Meetings are therefore a vital avenue for consistent engagement with our members, the community and other stakeholders. This week, there will be capacity building, presentations, networking as well as discussion on policies and topical issues. Most importantly this meeting ensures collective participation in our decision making process that ensures we have an equitable distribution of Internet resources in Africa.

If you take a look at the Conference Programme, you will agree that this Conference is going to be busy and productive. There is a lot to offer for a five-day event. I would also like to thank participants, for joining us and sharing your valuable experience and ideas. It is essential to bring together experts in the field of Internet technology so that we can realise together the potential of the Internet.

I would also like to thank our meeting sponsors, MTN Nigeria, Main One, Google, ICANN, Internet Society, ZACR, NITDA, Galaxy Backbone, NGCERT, VDT Communications, Guarantor Hosting and Internet Exchange Point of Nigeria for the most valuable support.

Finally I encourage you to make the most out of this conference, meet new friends and build your networks.

In closing, I hope that all of you will enjoy the Conference, and I wish all of you and especially our visitors from outside Nigeria a very pleasant stay in Lagos.

**Thank you.**